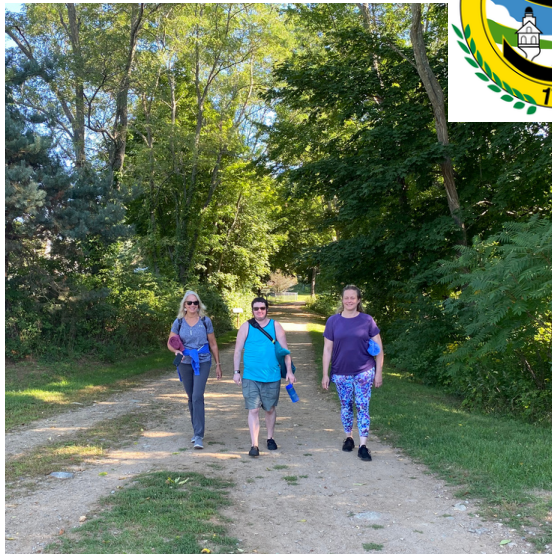


Stratham

Age Friendly Community Assessment



Prepared for the Town of Stratham by the Rockingham Planning Commission

Funded by Tufts Health Plan Foundation, AARP, and Rockingham Nutrition Meals on Wheels

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Introduction

Stratham is a predominantly rural community located in the Seacoast of New Hampshire bordered to the north by the Great Bay and by the adjacent communities of Newfields, Exeter, North Hampton, and Greenland. According to the 2020 Census, Stratham has a population of 7,669. Like the rest of New Hampshire, Stratham’s population is aging. The average age of Stratham residents jumped just over six years between 2000 and 2016, from approximately 38 to 44 years.¹ Stratham appears to be aging at a rate faster than the rest of New Hampshire. The average Stratham resident is now almost two years older than the average New Hampshire resident. Furthermore, almost every age group under the age of 55 has been shrinking as a percent of the population, even as the Town’s population increases.

According to Stratham’s Age Friendly community survey (2022), most residents wish to remain in Stratham as they reach their 70’s, 80’s and beyond (Figure 1).

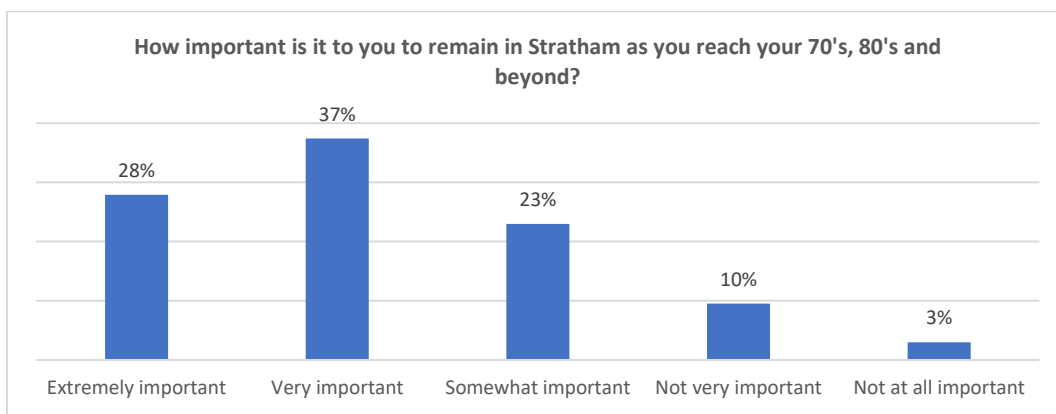


Figure 1: Survey Question 5—How important is it to you to remain in Stratham as you reach your 70's 80's and beyond?

This statistic is not unique to Stratham. According to AARP, 90% of Americans ages 65 and older want to “age in place” in their homes and their communities. Most want to do so because they like their community and want to remain close to their doctors, friends, families etc. Such connections are crucial to the health and wellbeing of older adults.²

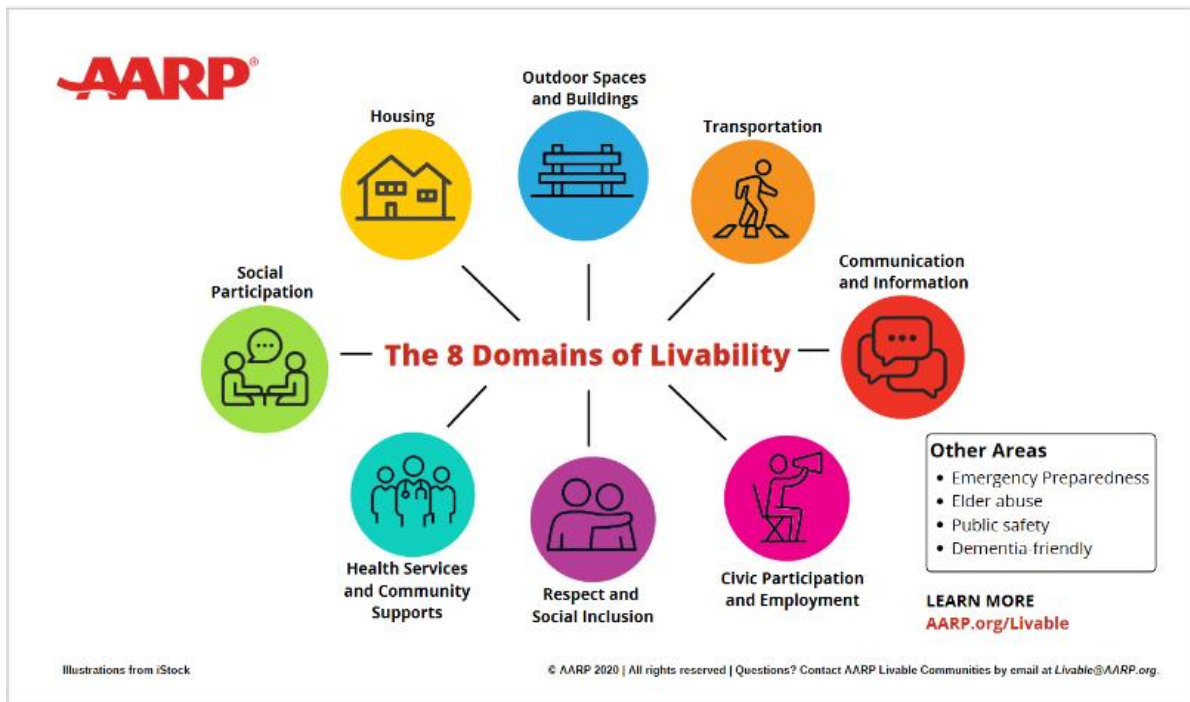
Planning for an aging population is crucial and will require coordination among community leaders, local land use boards, service providers and organizations to meet the needs of older adults. Transportation and mobility are critical for seniors as many will be unable to drive as they reach older adulthood. By 2040, the projected population of NH residents ages 65 and older 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 New Hampshire by 2030, based on population projections. There will be a greater need for enhanced recreation and civic engagement opportunities to prevent social isolation as well as for in-home and general support services such as help with shopping, errands, cooking, cleaning, healthcare etc. Another consideration will be the impacts on public safety services in town – particularly calls for medical emergencies. Considering these implications, it is important now more than ever to begin proactively planning for age friendly communities that can support residents of all ages and abilities.

¹ https://www.strathamnh.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf5051/f/uploads/2019.11.20_masterplan_adopted.pdf

² <https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/about/info-2018/aarp-livable-communities-preparing-for-an-aging-nation.html>

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, transportation, housing, social participation, respect and social inclusion, work and civic engagement, communication and information, and health and nutrition services.

Data for the following Stratham Snapshots was obtained from the Stratham Age Friendly Communities survey (full results in Appendix A) and the [2019 New Hampshire Healthy Aging Community Profile](#), unless otherwise noted.

Outdoor Spaces & Buildings

People need public places to gather, both indoors and out. It is important that gathering spaces are accessible to everyone. Green spaces, abundant seating, highly visible signage, elevators, zero-step entrances, railings along staircases and wide trails/sidewalks that can support wheelchairs, strollers, bicycles etc. are all features that can better support people of varying ages and abilities.

Stratham Outdoor Spaces and Buildings Data Snapshot

- Percent of survey respondents rating ease of access to Town Facilities Ratings Good or Excellent: 59% (*Age Friendly Community Survey, 2022*)
- Percent of survey respondents rating ease of access at Town Facilities Ratings Good or Excellent: 65% (*Age Friendly Community Survey, 2022*)

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. As most New Hampshire residents rely on their own vehicles to travel, retiring from driving can be one of the most difficult milestones in a senior’s life. Age-friendly communities encourage transit use and coordinate transit outreach opportunities to help seniors become familiar and comfortable with these services.

Stratham Transportation Data Snapshot

- Percentage of 65+ who own a motor vehicle: 97.6% (state average 91%)
- [Walk Score](https://www.walkscore.com/score/stratham-nh): This score estimates the accessibility of community facilities by safe, low stress pedestrian facilities (sidewalks, trails). 11/100 (car dependent) *Source: <https://www.walkscore.com/score/stratham-nh>*
- [Bike Score](https://www.walkscore.com/score/stratham-nh): This score estimates the accessibility of community facilities by safe, low stress bicycle routes (road shoulders, bike paths, trails). 21/100 (somewhat bikeable) *Source: <https://www.walkscore.com/score/stratham-nh>*

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 Stratham 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 near services and amenities that make it easier for older adults to live independently.

Stratham Housing Data Snapshot:

- Percent of residents age 60+ who own their home: 92.2 % (state average 79.9%)
- Percent of residents age 60+ who have a mortgage on their home: 39.2% (State average is 35.3%)
- Percent of homeowners age 65+ spending greater than 35% of income on housing: 23.9%
- Percent of renters age 65+ spending greater than 35% of income on housing: 0%
- Town has a senior tax abatement policy: Yes (*Source: <https://www.strathamnh.gov/assessing-department/pages/exemptions-credits>*)
- Town allows accessory dwelling units (in-law apartments): Attached or detached *Source: www.strathamnh.gov/planning-board/files/2021-zoning-ordinance*

- Workforce housing ordinance: Yes, and multi-family overlay Source: www.strathamnh.gov/planning-board/files/2021-zoning-ordinance
- Inclusionary zoning: Yes Source: www.strathamnh.gov/planning-board/files/2021-zoning-ordinance

Social Participation

Opportunities for accessible, affordable, and enjoyable social activities reduces 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.

Stratham Social Participation Data Snapshot

- Percent of survey respondents indicating they have contact with family, friends, or neighbors with whom they don't live, at least several times per week: 40%
- Percentage of survey respondents rating their social life as good or very good: 64%
- Percentage of survey respondents that utilize public libraries: 78%
- Percentage of survey respondents that utilize restaurants, coffee shops and stores: 90%
- Percentage of respondents indicating social isolation was a challenge during the covid19 pandemic: 48%
- Voter participation rate in 2018 US midterm election: 76.9%

Respect and Social Inclusion

Everyone in the community should feel valued. Opportunities for 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. Age Friendly communities encourage partnerships between businesses, agencies, clubs, and town departments to provide opportunities for residents of all ages to interact with and learn from each other.

Stratham Respect and Social Inclusion Data snapshot:

- Percent of survey respondents who Agree or Strongly Agree with statement "My Community is Welcoming to All People": 63% (30% Neutral, 6% Disagree or Strongly Disagree) (*Age Friendly Community Survey, 2022*)
- Percent of survey respondents who feel accepted regarding:
 - Spirituality or religious affiliation (53% yes)
 - Political views (42% yes)
 - Age (64% yes)
 - Sexuality (69% yes)
 - Gender identity (68% yes)
 - Race and ethnicity (76% yes)
 - Economic status (70% yes)

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. Volunteer fairs and senior career days are also effective mechanisms for enhancing engagement and involvement among older adults.

Stratham Work and Civic Engagement Data Snapshot:

- Percent of survey respondents working up to 39 hours/week: 12%
- Percent of survey respondents working 40 or more hours/week: 33%
- Percent of survey respondents working as community volunteers: 14%
- Percent of survey respondents who are retired: 52%

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. Through this project Stratham residents expressed a desire to have information for older adults in “one-stop-shop” formats, such as a printed booklet or website highlighting available services.

Stratham Communication and Information Data Snapshot

- Percent of residents age 60+ who used the internet in the past month: 86.3%
- Percent of survey respondents who noted internet/websites as primary source of information: 60%
- Percent of survey respondents indicating “Not Aware of Social Opportunities that Interest Me”: 43%

Health and Nutrition Services

Health services and assistance should be available, accessible, and affordable to older adults of 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.

Stratham Health and Nutrition Services Data Snapshot

- Percent of Stratham residents age 60+ received food stamps past year (2019): 0% Note—this is significantly lower than the state-wide average of 5.7%. It is also lower than the rate in other Assessment communities, including Exeter (2.3%), Portsmouth (2.8%), Fremont (1.7%), Hampton (5.6%), and Hampstead (2.1%).
- Percent 60+ with an annual physical exam/check-up in past year (2019): 90.9%
- Percent 60+ with an annual dental exam: 85.1%
- Percent Medicare managed care enrollees: 6.8% vs. 7.9% statewide
- Percent dually eligible for Medicare and Medicaid: 2.4% vs. 7.5% statewide
- Percent 60+ with a regular doctor: 97.4% vs. 95.8% statewide
- Percent 60+ who didn't see a doctor when needed due to cost: 2.6% vs. 5.4% statewide
- Percentage 65+ with depression: 22.3% vs. 28.8% statewide
- Percentage 65+ with Alzheimer's disease or dementia: 9.3% vs. 12.0% statewide

Stratham Age Friendly Communities Project

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.

Stratham Steering Committee

The first step in Stratham’s Age Friendly Community Assessment was to establish a local steering committee made up of town officials, staff, and residents. Stratham’s local committee included representatives from the following entities:

- Stratham Planning Board
- Stratham Selectboard
- Stratham Parks and Recreation
- Wiggin Memorial Library
- Stratham 76ers (local senior citizen group)
- Stratham Planning Department
- Stratham residents

At their first meeting on February 23, 2022, steering committee members worked with Rockingham Planning Commission staff to draft a survey designed to assess the needs of older adults in Stratham. They also brainstormed locations and methods to distribute the survey to reach as many residents as possible. Over the next few months, steering committee members helped to distribute and promote the survey in town, which was available in both paper and electronic formats. There were 237 online responses to the survey. Full survey results can be found in Appendix A at the end of the assessment.



Figure 2: RPC Presentation at Stratham 76ers Meeting May 2022

At their second meeting on April 11, 2022, committee members reviewed the survey data and identified key themes to be explored in more detail at a community-wide forum. These themes included access to affordable transportation options, affordable senior support services, affordable housing options and recreation and social opportunities. Members then held two community-wide Forums on May 25, 2022,

at the Stratham Municipal Center, which featured an information sharing component from local service providers as well as breakout sessions to get more detailed input on key themes. Local service partners in attendance included:


- Stratham Parks and Recreation
- Wiggin Memorial Library
- Stratham 76ers
- Rockingham Nutrition Meals on Wheels
- Transportation Assistance for Seacoast Citizens
- St. Vincent De Paul Community Assistance Center
- Exeter Adult Education
- ServiceLink

The Stratham Steering Committee met for a third time on October 12, 2022, to review and provide input on the final Assessment report and discuss next steps with committee members.

Survey Results & Community Forum Key Themes

Survey Methodology

Stratham's Age Friendly Community Survey was adapted from a national model developed by AARP. The survey includes questions related to AARP's [Eight Domains of Livability](#): 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 the Town Hall, Library, and Recreation Department.





**STRATHAM AGE-FRIENDLY
COMMUNITY SURVEY**

What makes Stratham a great place to grow up and grow old?
In partnership with the Rockingham Planning Commission, Stratham
is working to understand the needs of older adults in the community.
Your input will help us understand what's working now and what's
needed in the future.

TAKE THE SURVEY TODAY!

[HTTPS://PUBLICINPUT.COM/AGEFRIENDLYSTRATHAM](https://publicinput.com/agefriendlystratham)



PAPER SURVEYS AVAILABLE AT THE TOWN HALL & LIBRARY
FOR QUESTIONS CONTACT ROCKINGHAM PLANNING COMMISSION - 603-778-0885

The survey was promoted using a range of methods including:

- Post cards at Town Hall, Public Library, and Recreation Department
- Town website
- Town Facebook page

KEY THEME—Transportation Options

What We Heard

By and large, the most prevalent concern expressed by Stratham residents regarding aging in their community is having transportation options once they can no longer drive (Figure 3). Active transportation options such as walking and biking as well as public transportation services are relatively limited in town. Stratham is bisected by two major highways: Route 108 and Route 33, both of which are predominantly lined by highway-oriented commercial development and carry high volumes of traffic. These roadways, particularly for Portsmouth Avenue, serve as barriers that divide neighborhoods from one another, making it unsafe to navigate by any means other than with an automobile.³

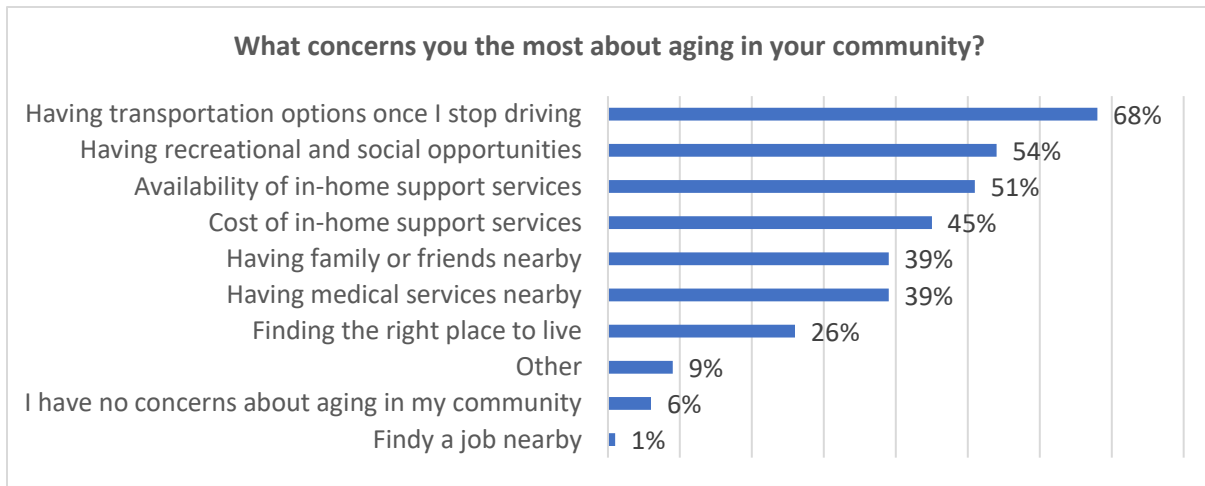


Figure 3: Survey Question 7—What concerns you the most about aging in your community?

Additionally, public transportation options in Stratham are limited and many residents, through both the community survey and community forums, expressed that information about such transportation options is not easily accessible or promoted. Many were unaware of existing transit options such as COAST, which provides fixed-route transit to Exeter and Newmarket and Transportation Assistance for Seacoast Citizens (TASC), a volunteer driver program that offers on-demand transportation to residents ages 55 and older. Additionally, Rockingham Nutrition Meals on Wheels (RNMOW) provides transportation for residents ages 60 and older to medical appointments, errands, and shopping, which was widely unknown among those who attended the Stratham Community Forum. Similarly, ServiceLink, helps connect those who need a ride to providers.

However, despite the availability of some transportation services in town, most Stratham residents drive their own vehicle (figure 4).

“I would not be able to live here once I stop driving. Nowhere, to my knowledge, is there housing close to amenities I can walk to. I would have no choice but to either move to a CCRC or have to depend on costly services.” – Stratham resident

³ https://www.strathamnh.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf5051/f/uploads/2019.11.20_masterplan_adopted.pdf

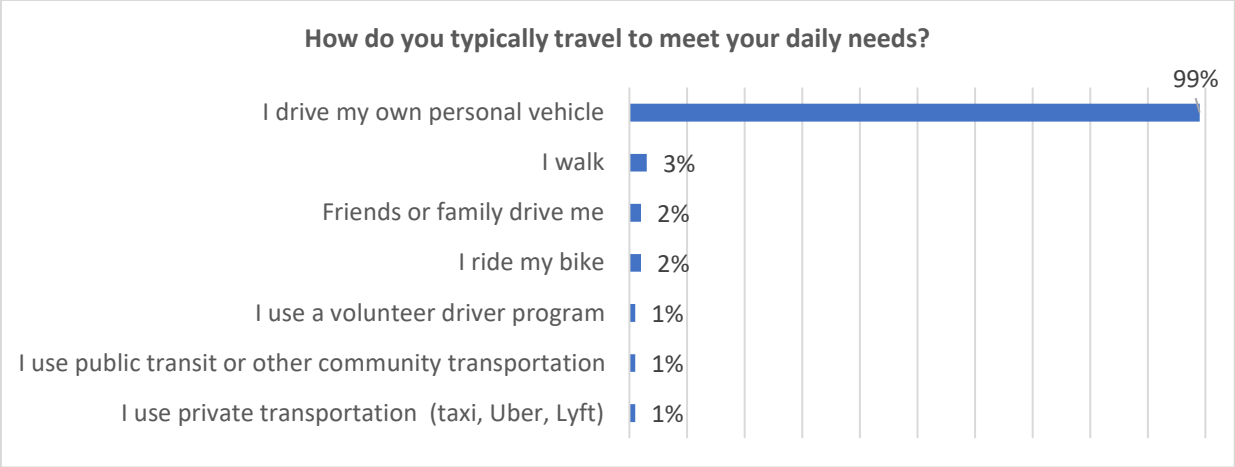


Figure 4: Survey Question 13—How do you typically travel to meet your daily needs?

Additionally, those who are aware of these public transit services expressed that the mechanisms for reserving a ride for one or more of these services is complicated and unreliable.

Opportunities for active transportation such as walking, and biking are also limited in town (unless on a designated trail). Many residents indicated that they would like to see more sidewalks around areas such as Portsmouth Avenue and Route 33.

Opportunities for Improvement

During the Stratham Community Forums, it was discussed how the town should better promote and distribute information on existing transportation options in town such as COAST, TASC and RNMOV. This information, including hours of operation, routes, costs, and instructions for reserving a ride should be posted in a more apparent location on the town’s website and hard copies such as flyers should be available at the town office and library. Additionally, it would be beneficial to have a designated person either at the town office or in the library who is able to sit down with residents and guide them through the process of reserving a ride. An informational session with COAST and/or TASC that is advertised to residents would be helpful. Additionally, at the Community Forum, TASC expressed the need for more volunteer drivers, which not only helps people get where they need to go but offers civic engagement opportunities to those who may be retired and/or looking for opportunities to stay engaged in the community.

“Recently my father (83-year-old retired veteran) had serious health issues and began dialysis 4x week. My family found it extremely challenging to find the services available to help us help him. Specifically, we couldn't find transport for him between Durham and Portsmouth, as TASC doesn't go to Durham, so we did all the driving ourselves.” – Stratham resident

Another transportation opportunity that was discussed at the community forum and amongst the local steering committee was the possibility of the town purchasing or renting a van to transport residents to various excursions organized by the Parks and Recreation Department, Library, or other town departments. It was noted that the town had pursued this option in the past but finding staff to drive the vehicle as well as manage trip scheduling, driver scheduling, and vehicle maintenance was challenging. Several members of the local steering committee met with the Alliance for Community Transportation

(ACT) to discuss this idea as well as other transportation options. ACT is one of nine Regional Coordinating Councils (RCCs) for community transportation around the state whose primary focus is improving coordination between COAST and the various non-profit and municipal transportation services in the region. A possibility discussed during the conversation with ACT, was for Stratham to coordinate with neighboring municipalities such as Exeter to split the cost of one vehicle that services both communities. This would optimize the use of the vehicle and lower the cost of buying and maintaining a vehicle. This may also result in additional income to support a full-time driver.



Figure 5: Stratham Age Friendly Community Forum, May 2022

Stratham Age Friendly Transportation Goals

- Improve the town’s website to include information on transportation services available to seniors in town. Make this page more apparent on the town website.
- Provide hard copy fliers or brochures with information on transportation services available to residents in town, including instructions on how to reserve a ride. Make these fliers available at the town offices, library and Parks and Recreation department.
- Explore holding an informational session with TASC and RNMOV at the library and advertise the session to Stratham residents.
- Coordinate with neighboring communities such as Exeter to explore sharing the cost of a vehicle for the purposes of recreational excursions.

KEY THEME—Senior Support Services

What We Heard:

Access to affordable support services was another major concern expressed by Stratham residents in both the survey and at the community forums. Most Stratham residents would like to remain in their own town as they age. Furthermore, most Stratham residents believe it to be “very” or “extremely” important to be able to live independently in their own homes as they grow older (Figure 6).

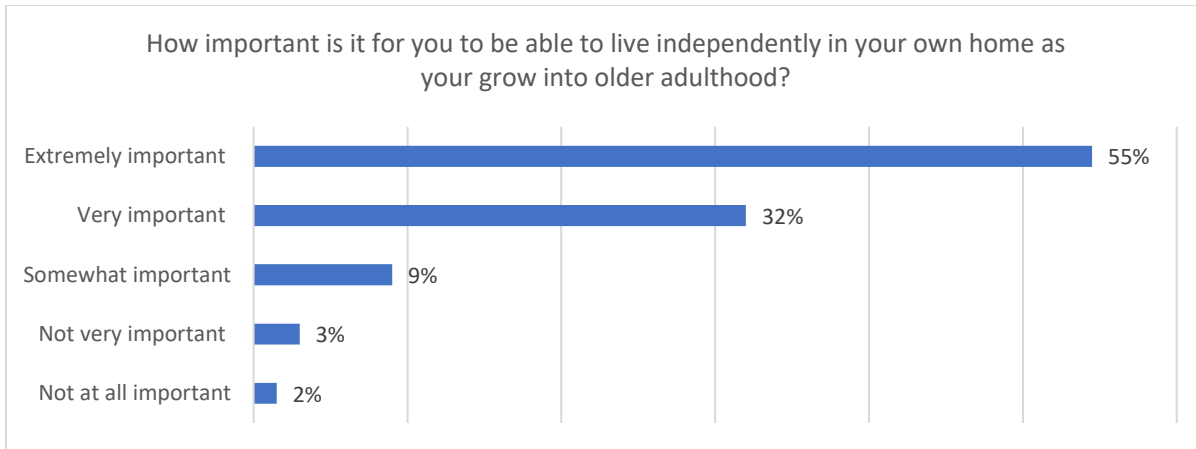


Figure 6: Survey Question 12—How important is it for you to be able to live independently in your own home as you grow into older adulthood?

Because most residents would like to continue living in Stratham as they get older, it is important now more than ever to begin planning for an older population. As discussed above, transportation services are critical for an aging population as many will be unable to keep driving as they reach their 70’s, 80’s and beyond. Therefore, there may be greater need for help with routine activities such as grocery shopping and errands in addition to in-home support such as cleaning, cooking, and other household chores. Many Stratham residents indicated that finding reliable and trustworthy support services in town or nearby is difficult. Many go to the town offices for information as well as the popular “Stratham Talks” community Facebook group. Additionally, finding trustworthy sources was also a noted challenge for Stratham residents. Often, residents use “Stratham Talks” to find vetted and trustworthy services in the community, however, this is not always the most consistent and reliable source of information.

Opportunities for improvement

Similar to transportation services, residents expressed that information on support services should be made more easily accessible on the town’s website and at Town Hall. Many were unaware that Meals on Wheels offered transportation services and that meals could be picked up or delivered free of charge to anyone over 65 years of age, regardless of income or status. Residents agreed that routine wellness checks for seniors are imperative as well as respite services for caregivers.

Stratham residents also discussed possible opportunities for partnerships and collaboration to improve support services for seniors in town. There was discussion on ways the town could partner with high school students to help with technology, yard work and other home maintenance activities. There was reference to [Newmarket Cares Day](#), during which Newmarket high school students work with the community church on a variety of projects in town such as landscaping, spring clean-up, gardening, simple carpentry etc. This type of intergenerational activity would be beneficial in Stratham as it would not only help those in need but also foster community relationships and volunteerism among both older and younger adults. Another idea that was proposed was for the library to invite service providers such as Meals on Wheels or Service Link for an informational session and/or workshop to help residents with finding and accessing needed services and resources.

Stratham Senior Support Services Goals:

- Improve the town’s website to include a dedicated page for all support services and organizations available to Stratham residents. Make this page easily accessible on the town website.
- Explore partnering with Cooperative Middle School to engage students in activities that support Stratham residents.
- Coordinate an informational session with RNMOW, ServiceLink and other service providers at the library and promote among Stratham residents.

KEY THEME—Housing and Livability

What we heard:

Affordable housing options is another major concern expressed by Stratham residents among both young and older generations. Single-family homes are the dominant housing type in Stratham. Between 2010 and 2016, the State reported that Stratham had permitted the construction of 91 single-family homes compared with only 10 multi-family units⁴. While these types of homes are often suitable for families as well as valued for maintaining the rural character cherished by residents, many older adults find it challenging to maintain multi-story, single-family homes as they age, especially when children have moved out or if spouses have passed away. Therefore, many people look to downsize as they get older and be more centrally located with easy access to stores, pharmacies, doctors, cafes etc. Ironically, many of the community features that older adults look for in a home are the same characteristics that young professionals and families desire - smaller, more affordable units in walkable neighborhoods, proximity to downtowns, doctors, retail, cafes etc. and adequate public transit options. Therefore, younger, and older adults are competing for similar housing types in an already competitive housing market, further exacerbating the need for more diverse and affordable housing options. Many Stratham residents indicated that if they have looked for a place to live in the past five years or were considering finding another home to live in Stratham, there were few options available that met their needs/desires (Figure 7). During the community forums, one resident shared how their family members had to move out of state to find housing that met their needs.

	Many Available	Some Available	Few Available	None Available	Not Applicable	Don't Know
Desired type of home (e.g., single family, apartment, condo, other)	2%	17%	40%	15%	16%	9%
Design (e.g., single floor living, width of doors, few, or no steps to get in)	1%	18%	39%	13%	16%	13%
Location near places I want to go	5%	19%	38%	11%	15%	11%
Maintenance I'm willing to take on (e.g., lawn, raking, snow clearance)	5%	21%	38%	9%	17%	10%
Affordability within my budget	3%	15%	36%	23%	15%	7%
Sense of acceptance (if looking for an assisted living or other retirement community or neighborhood)	3%	19%	28%	8%	25%	18%

Figure 7: Survey Question 11— If you have looked for a place to live in the past five years, or are considering finding another

⁴ https://www.strathamnh.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf5051/f/uploads/2019.11.20_masterplan_adopted.pdf

Furthermore, Stratham residents noted considerable concern through both the survey and community forums about being able to afford to stay in Stratham as they age. According to the New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority, median home sales prices in Stratham have consistently been higher than those in Rockingham County and the State of New Hampshire (\$400,000 as of 2017). Similarly, rent in Stratham has consistently been higher than that of the state of New Hampshire. Gross rent in Stratham in 2016 was \$1,503; nearly \$500 higher than that of the state and \$370 higher than Rockingham County.⁵

Opportunities for improvement

While the RPC Age Friendly Communities initiative cannot fix Stratham’s (and the State’s) housing affordability crisis, it does intend to improve awareness of the specific needs of older adults as well as housing preferences among both seniors and young adults. This information can be used to inform decision-making and local land use regulation development. As stated in the Stratham Master Plan, housing development is the foundation for meeting the needs of an aging population. Currently, Stratham allows for some diversity of housing choices in town such as duplexes, in-law apartments, workforce housing, multi-family housing, senior housing, and open space cluster subdivisions. However, Stratham recognizes the need to revisit and revise some of these existing ordinances to increase opportunities for a variety of housing types in town.

“I suspect I’ll remain in my large family home because of lack of appropriate housing for seniors. I am not in a position to afford a facility such as Riverwoods.” – Stratham resident

“As housing gets more unaffordable for working middle class in Stratham, I’m concerned about the cost once I am on a fixed income.” – Stratham resident

Housing and Livability Goals:

- Incorporate the feedback and input from this Age Friendly community assessment into the town’s master plan.
- Encourage the town to review existing zoning, site plan and subdivision regulations to identify areas for improving and incentivizing the development of age-friendly housing types in town including accessory dwelling units, mixed-use and elderly housing development.
- Consider the establishment of an age friendly housing ordinance (see [Chester, NH](#) example) encouraging accessible housing design features and cluster development.

KEY THEME—Recreation and Social Engagement Opportunities

Having recreational and social opportunities in town is very important among both younger and older generations. Most residents wish to remain active and engaged in their community, especially after retirement. Residents want to stay connected, especially with friends, community, and family members. Providing opportunities for social engagement and recreation in town enhances community relationships, fosters inclusivity, and prevents social isolation – a significant problem among older adults in rural communities, especially when they can no longer drive.

⁵ 2016 American Community Survey 5-year estimates (retrieved from Stratham Master Plan, 2022)

Stratham currently offers a variety of recreational opportunities. [The Parks and Recreation Department](#) organizes numerous activities and events for both children and adults such as exercise classes, painting classes, organized sports leagues, pickleball, ultimate frisbee, Tai Chi, snowshoe hikes etc. The Parks and Recreation department also organizes trips to Portland, Boston, and the Lakes Region throughout the year at a reduced cost to Stratham residents. [Wiggin Memorial Library](#) also provides a variety of programming for seniors in town and is often viewed as the community “hub” where many go to find out what is going on in town. Library cards are available at no fee to all residents and the library offers a variety of programming for older adults such as knitting groups, yoga, and computer classes. The Stratham “76ers” is a local senior group in town that organizes social events and activities. The group meets monthly from September to June at the Stratham Fire Station where a potluck lunch is provided by members followed by information speakers or various programs. The group also organizes its own field trips in conjunction with the Stratham Parks and Recreation Department.



Figure 8: Photo credit: Stratham Parks & Recreation Department

In addition to the various programming organized by the town and the library, there are also a few trails and parks maintained by the town such as Stratham Hill Park, which is a popular destination for hiking, snowshoeing, and mountain biking and contains a skating rink during the winter months, picnic areas, sports fields, and courts for public use. Stevens Park is also available for public use and contains tennis courts, sports fields, and playground areas. For more information on the town’s recreational areas visit: <https://www.strathamnh.gov/parks-recreation>



Figure 9: Stratham 76ers. Retrieved from Stratham Master Plan, photo credit: Richard Swett

What We Heard:

Despite numerous recreational activities offered in town, many Stratham residents, through both the survey and the community forums, expressed not knowing what's available or going on in town. When specifically asked about whether they partake in senior activities in the community, 34% of survey respondents indicated that they were unsure whether such activities were available. Additionally, when asked 'what prevents you from socializing more with others', 43% of survey respondents indicated that they're unaware of activities/events that interest them (figure 10). This was followed by 30% of respondents indicating that the scheduling of activities is also a barrier to participation.

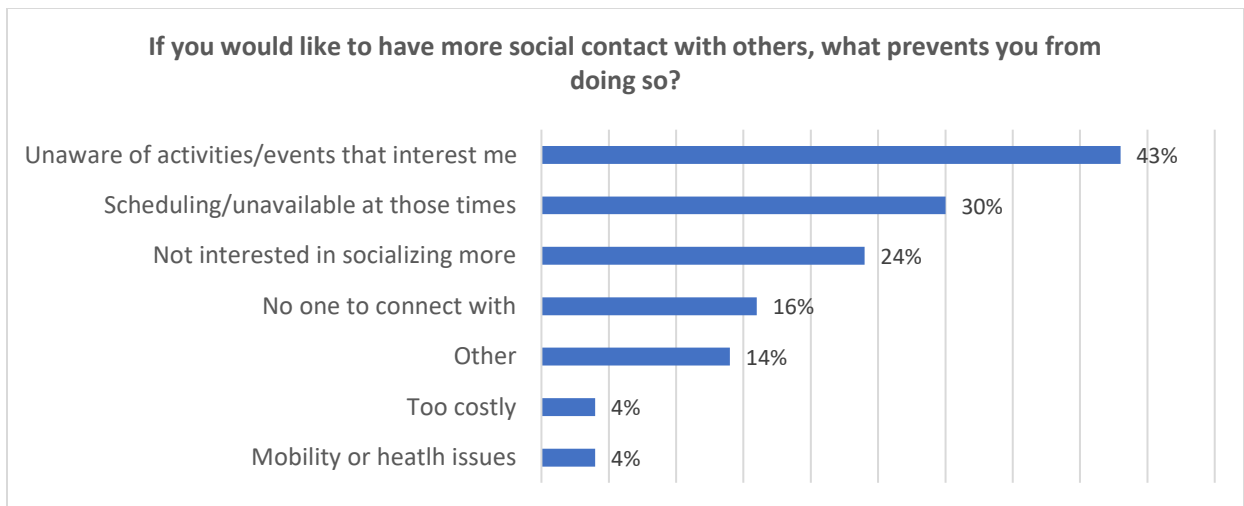


Figure 10: Survey Question 30— If you would like to have more social contact with others, what prevents you from doing so?

Additionally, lack of community space to hold more events is limited to just the library and town hall. It was discussed how increasingly the town lacks both staff and space capacity to expand the number of activities to Stratham residents.

Opportunities for Improvement

Like the previous sections of this assessment, access to information on social events and opportunities in town was identified as a need for Stratham residents. The local steering committee expressed surprise to see the number of survey responses indicating a lack of senior activities in town with the array of activities supported by the Parks and Recreation department, library, and Stratham 76ers. However, the committee members acknowledged that more could be done to publicize information in town on activities and events available to seniors. One of the main sources of information is the Select Board Newsletter, which includes information on all town wide happenings, special events and department programming. It was discussed how the town could better promote the newsletter to encourage more residents to sign up, especially new residents. It was also discussed how the town should have a dedicated page on the home page of the town website for all activities and services available to seniors. Most survey respondents indicated that they get their information about services or events in the community from internet and websites (60%). Therefore, improving the town website may enhance access to information for many. However, word of mouth is still a powerful source of information, as indicated by survey respondents (Figure 11).

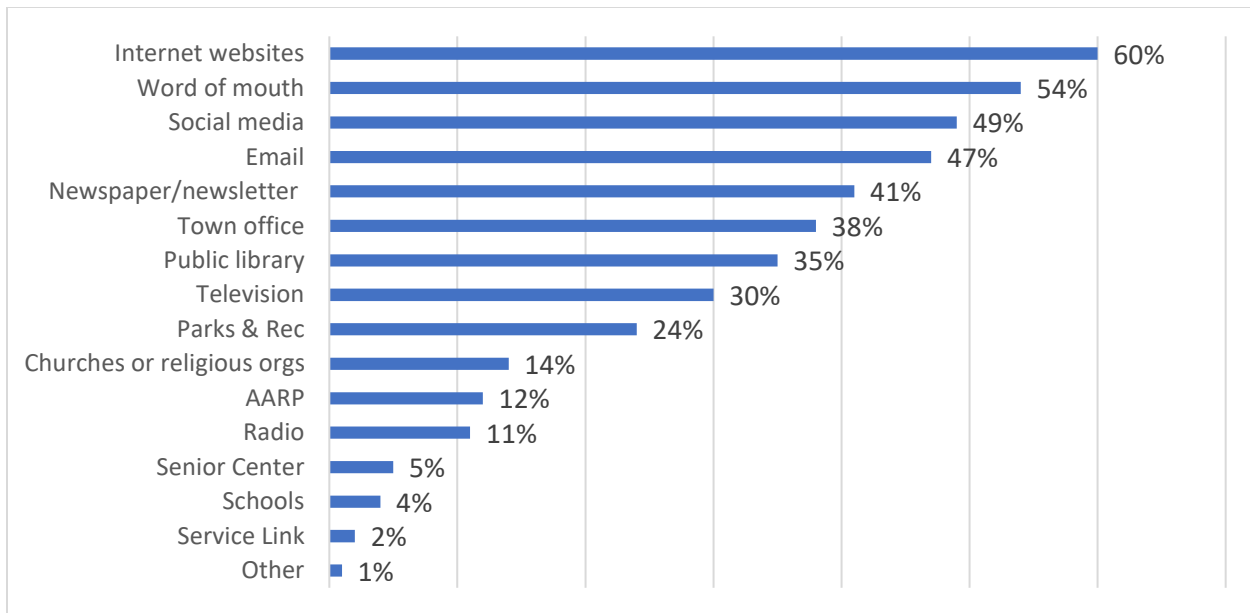


Figure 11: Survey Question 24—How do you get information about services or events in your community?

Social media, email and newspaper/newsletters were the next highest-ranked sources of information that Stratham residents utilize. The popular “Stratham Talks” Facebook group is a very effective means of communication among Stratham residents. Therefore, there may be opportunities for the town to better utilize social media for promoting services and events in town.

Stratham Recreation and Social Engagement Goals

- Add a dedicated page for all social and recreational opportunities available to seniors in town on the town website. Make this page apparent on the home page.
- Promote the Selectboard newsletter and encourage residents to subscribe. Promote the newsletter on the home page of the town’s website.
- Promote recreational opportunities and events on the *Stratham Talks* Facebook group.
- Provide hard copy information flyers or brochures with information on town recreation opportunities at the library and town hall.

Conclusion and Next Steps

This Age Friendly assessment aims to build awareness of and support for community-led initiatives that support the needs of older adults in Stratham. The feedback gathered for this report is intended to be utilized by local leaders, elected officials, town departments and community organizations in their planning and decision-making processes. Creating change in a community starts at the local level where local government, businesses, organizations, and residents all play a role in cultivating a livable community, one where younger and older people can and want to live, work and play.

While this Assessment Report serves as the final product for Year one of the Age Friendly Communities program, it is just the beginning of Age Friendly work to take place in Stratham. During year two of the project, the Rockingham Planning Commission will provide technical assistance to two of the four assessment communities with implementing a local project identified through the Year One assessment

work. The RPC encourages Stratham to review the goals and ideas that were voiced by residents through both the survey and community forums to identify potential projects that could be implemented in year 2.

The following are potential next steps that the Town could pursue to continue helping residents thrive at every age and stage of life.

Step 1—Conduct an inventory of Stratham’s existing resources. Communities tend to jump into creating new resources, but often existing assets can be utilized to meet current needs. Cast a wide net when thinking about the community’s 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.

Stratham already has a wide variety of people and resources dedicated to making the town an inclusive and accessible place for people of all ages and abilities. The town is fortunate to have vibrant and energetic town staff as well as local community champions working together to address the needs of older adults in the community. Stratham should continue to promote and increase awareness of its existing community resources.

Step 2—Analyze Stratham’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 A 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. Based on the goals identified from the community survey and town-wide forums, there are several activities Stratham could pursue to help it become a more age-friendly community. These might include creating easy-to-read outreach and educational materials,

improving the town's website, coordinating with neighboring communities on improving transportation options and revising existing land use regulations to strengthen opportunities for elderly housing and mixed-use development.

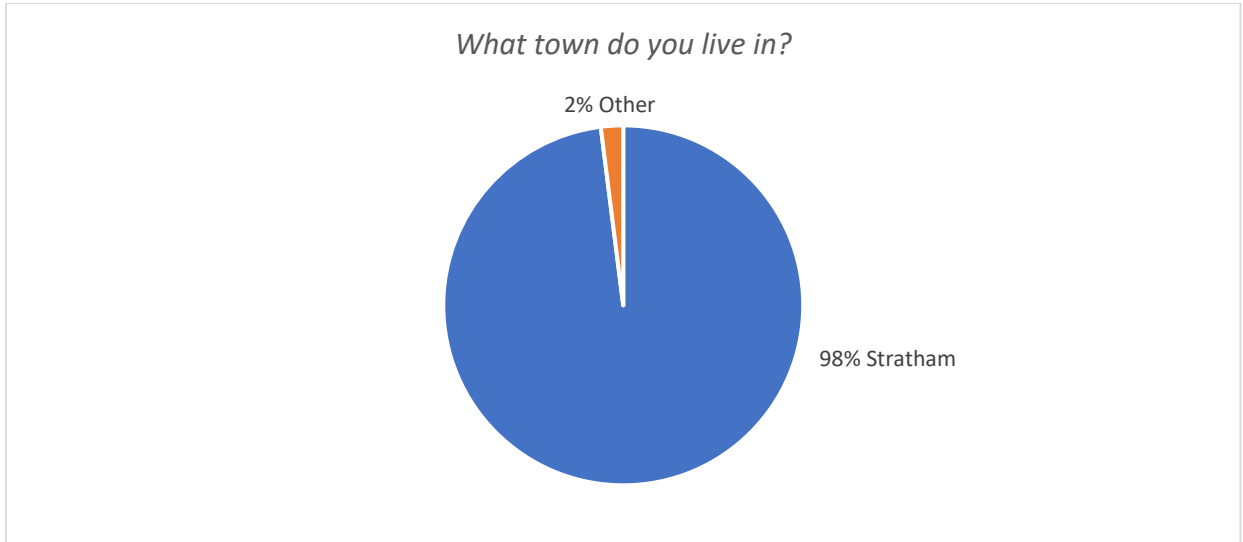
Acknowledgements

The Rockingham Planning Commission thanks the Stratham Steering Committee members for their time and effort in helping to develop this age friendly community assessment. We hope the information provided in this report helps inform and advance efforts to make the community a more livable place for people of all ages and abilities. We look forward to continuing this critical conversation in Stratham and the region and supporting communities in their work to become more Age Friendly.

Appendix A. Stratham Survey Summary Report

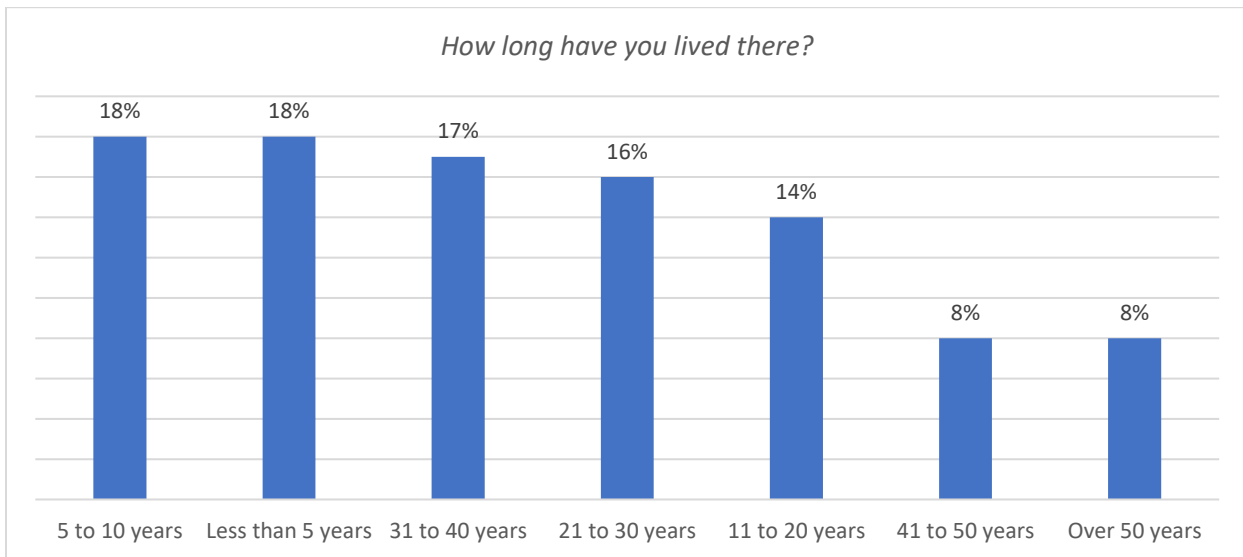
Question 1: What town do you live in?

98% of survey respondents (232) who answered the survey are from Stratham. 2% (5) of respondents reside in Brentwood, Danville, East Kingston, and Epping.



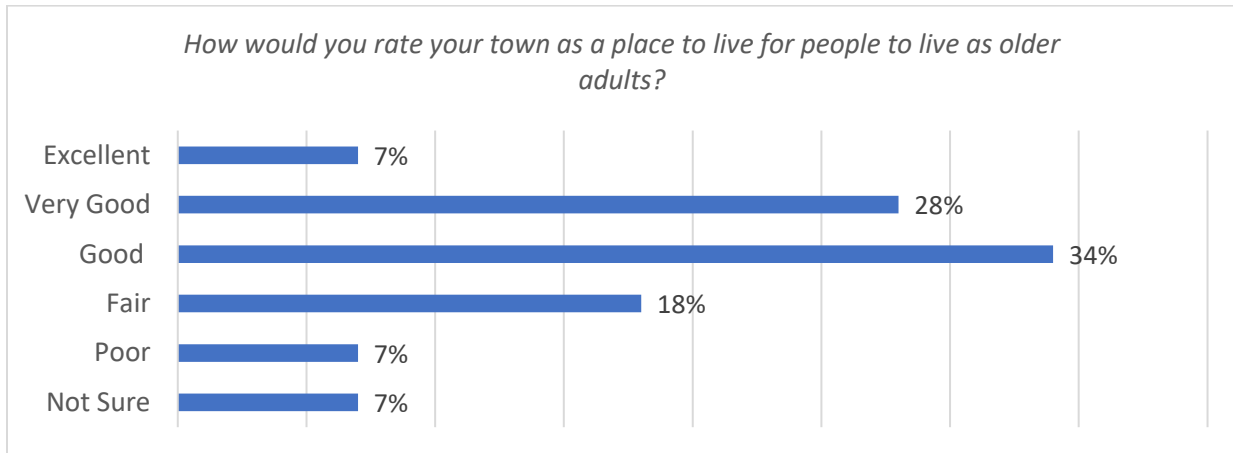
Question 2: How long have you lived there?

The majority of survey respondents indicated that they've lived in town for 5 – 10 years.



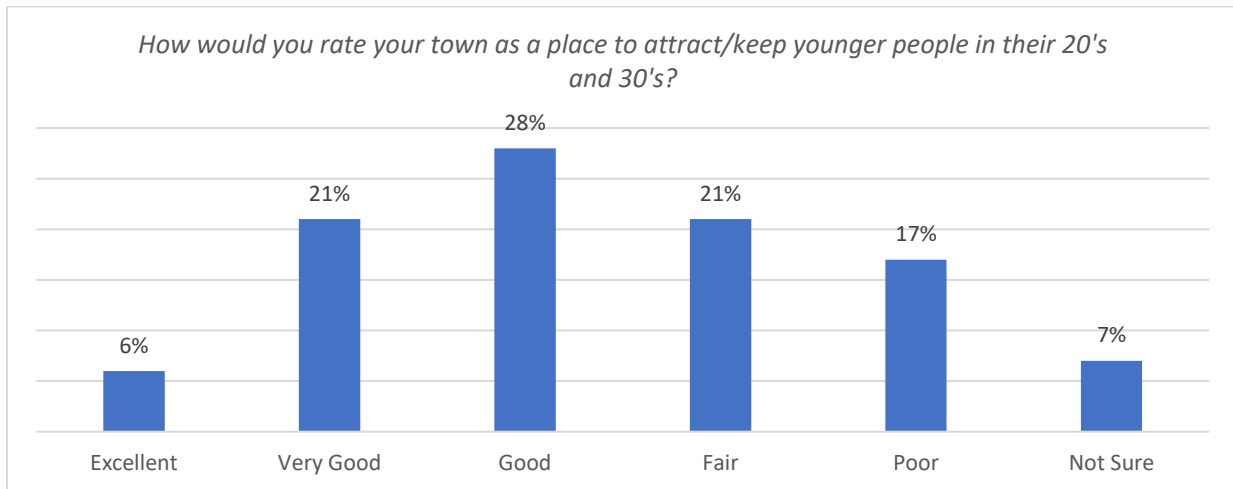
Question 3: How would you rate your town as a place to live for people to live as older adults?

By and large, most survey respondents indicated that their town is a good place to live for people as older adults.



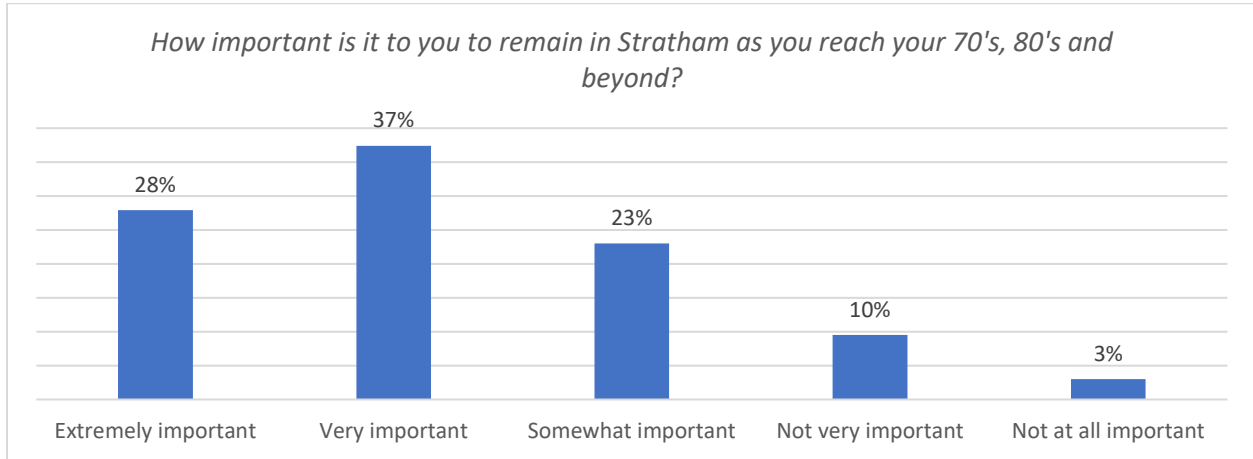
Question 4: How would you rate your town as a place to attract / keep people in their 20's and 30's?

Most survey respondents indicated that they'd rate their town as a good place to attract / keep people in their 20's and 30's.



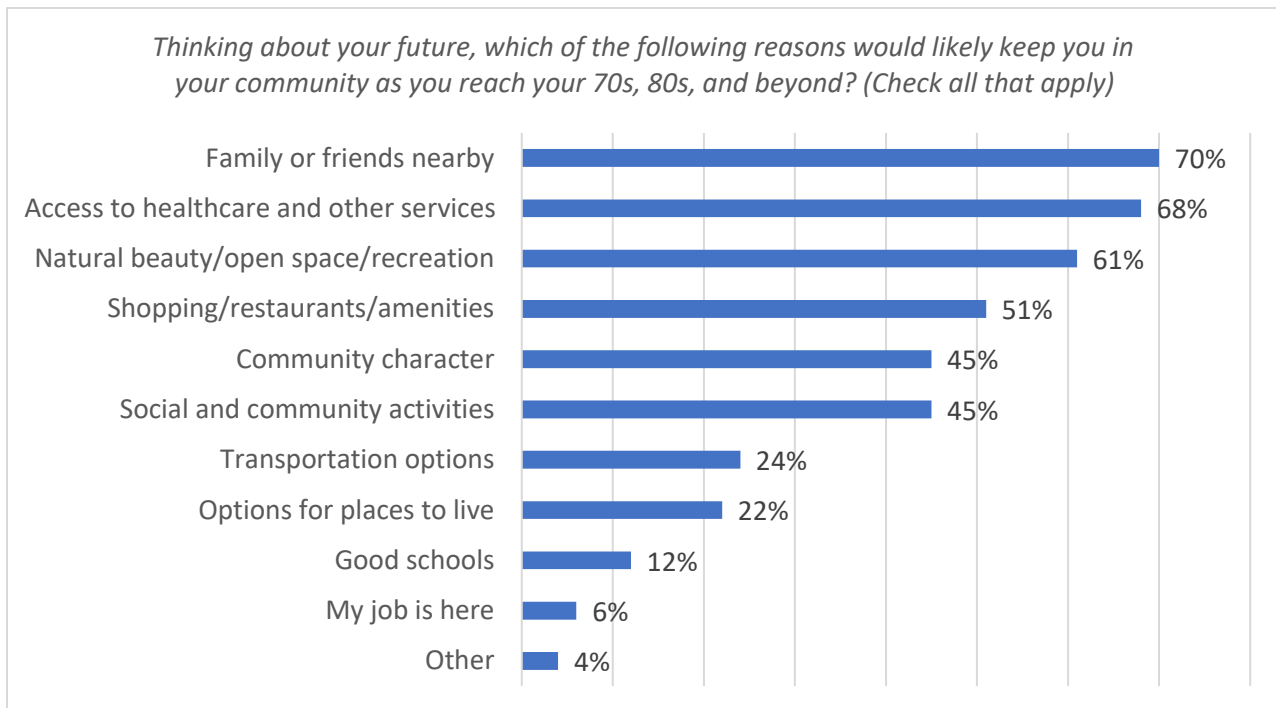
Question 5: How important is it for you to remain in your town as you reach your 70's, 80's and beyond?

Most survey respondents indicated that it is either very important or extremely important to remain in town as they get older.

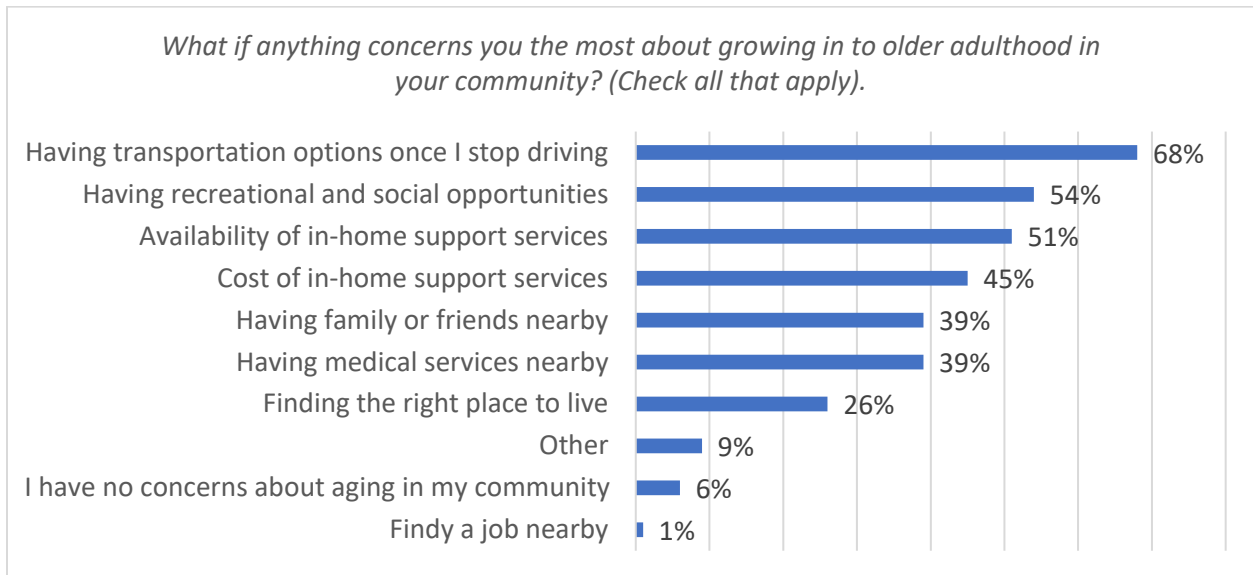


Question 6: Thinking about your future, which of the following reasons would likely keep you in your community as you reach your 70s, 80s, and beyond? (Check all that apply)

Most survey respondents indicated that the biggest reason they would remain in their communities is due to having family or friends nearby. This is followed closely by access to healthcare and other services, natural beauty/open space/recreation, shopping/restaurants/amenities, and community character.



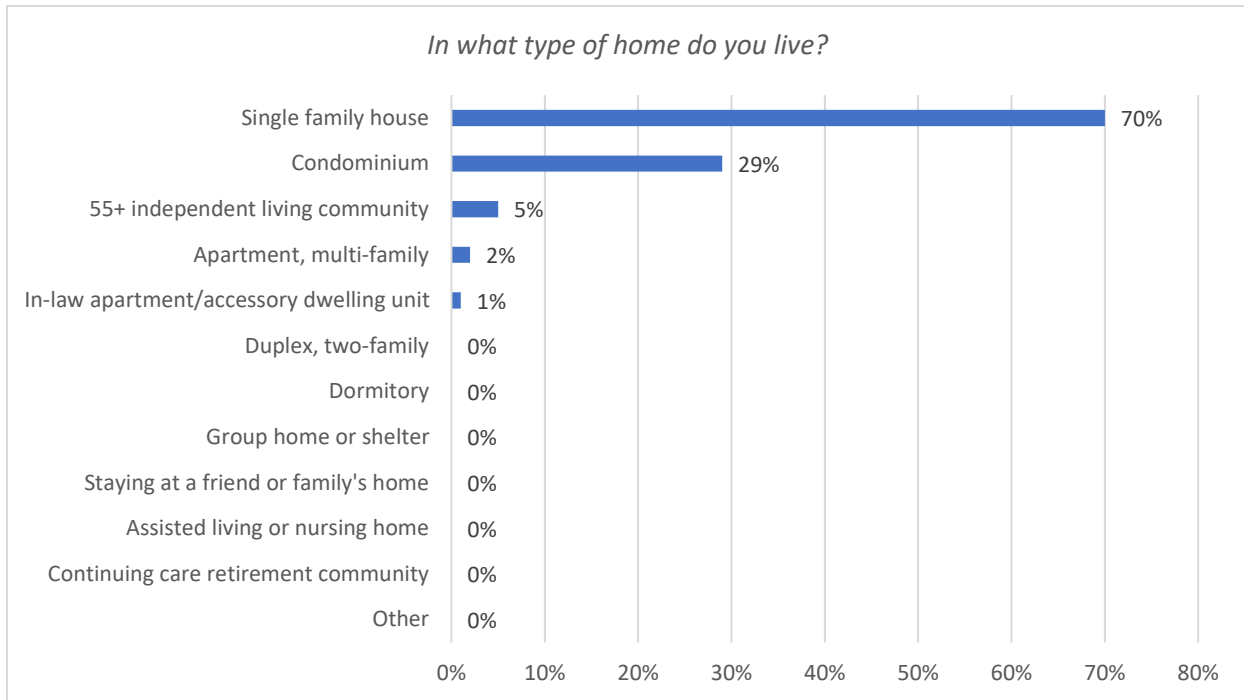
Question 7: What if anything concerns you the most about growing into older adulthood in your community? (Check all that apply).



Question 8: Regarding the concerns you noted in the previous question, what changes would help? (See end of report for full list of comments)



Question 9: In what type of home do you live? (Check all that apply)



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

Most residents indicated that their current home fits their needs either very well, or ok.

	Very well	OK	Not very well	Not at all
Design (e.g. single floor living, width of doors, few or no steps to get in)	57%	27%	12%	4%
Type of home (ex. Single family, apartment, condominium, other)	71%	28%	1%	0%
Location near places I want to go	58%	33%	8%	1%
Amount of routine maintenance (ex. Raking, snow shoveling)	34%	36%	26%	4%
Affordability within my budget	36%	50%	12%	2%
Sense of acceptance (if in an assisted living or other retirement community)	39%	43%	6%	12%

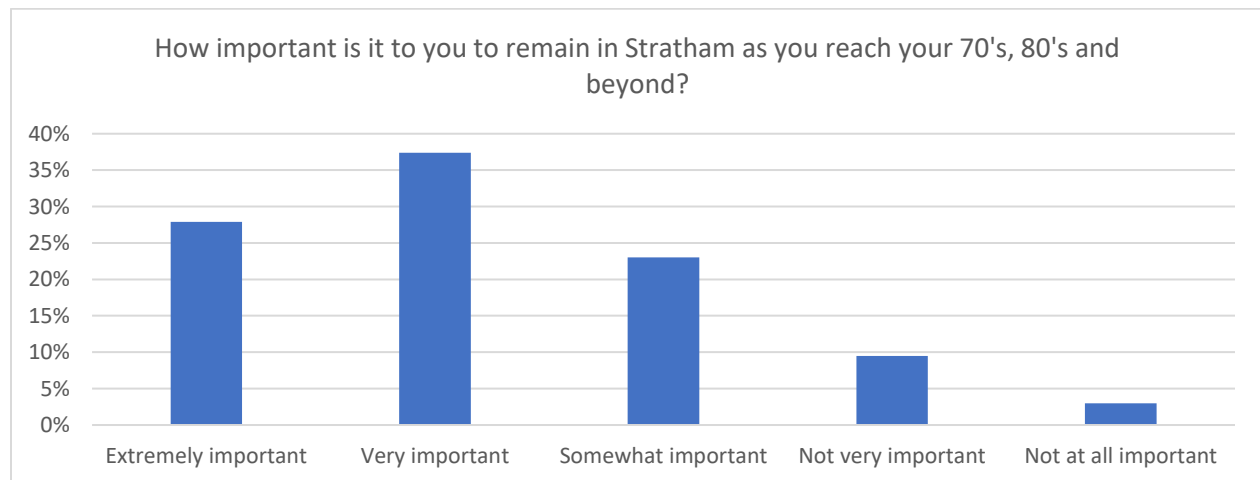
Question 11: If you have looked for a place to live in the past five years, or are considering another place to live in your community in the future, how would you rate the options available for you related to:

	Many Available	Some Available	Few Available	None Available	Not Applicable	Don't Know
Desired type of home (e.g. single family, apartment, condo, other)	2%	17%	40%	15%	16%	9%
Design (e.g. single floor living, width of doors, few or no steps to get in)	1%	18%	39%	13%	16%	13%
Location near places I want to go	5%	19%	38%	11%	15%	11%
Maintenance I'm willing to take on (e.g. lawn, raking, snow clearance)	5%	21%	38%	9%	17%	10%
Affordability within my budget	3%	15%	36%	23%	15%	7%
Sense of acceptance (if looking for an assisted living or other retirement community or neighborhood)	3%	19%	28%	8%	25%	18%

While responses varied across the board, most respondents indicated that there were few housing options available to them in each of the above categories.

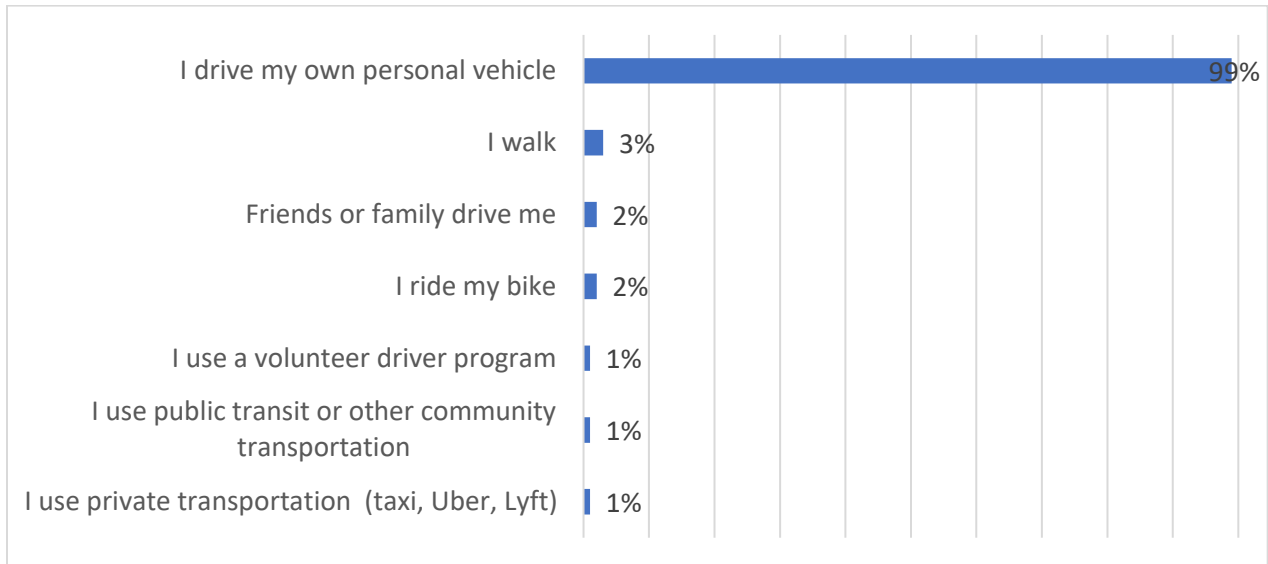
Question 12: How important is it for you to be able to live independently in your own home as you grow into older adulthood?

The vast majority of survey respondents indicated that it's extremely or very important for them to remain in their own homes as they grow into older adulthood.



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

Just about every respondent drives their own personal vehicle to meet their daily needs.

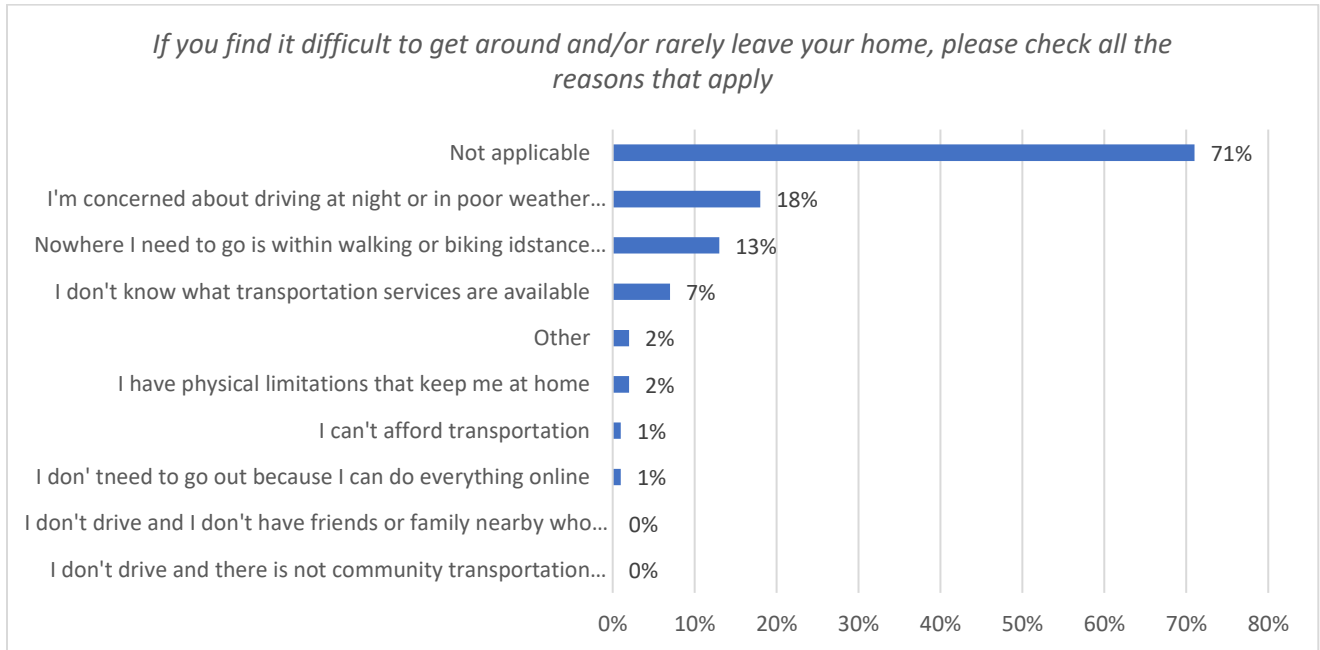


Question 14: How would you rate the following in your town?

	Good	Fair	Poor	Not Sure	Not Applicable
Sidewalks	3%	7%	67%	3%	21%
Bicycle safety	5%	19%	62%	7%	8%
Parking	57%	28%	5%	2%	9%
Public/community transportation	2%	10%	59%	20%	10%
Easy to read traffic signs	64%	32%	3%	1%	1%
Enforced speed limits	47%	37%	11%	4%	1%
Benches where I walk	8%	12%	41%	10%	29%
Ease of getting to town facilities	59%	29%	6%	3%	4%
Ease of access at town facilities	65%	26%	6%	3%	2%
Public restrooms	6%	13%	18%	51%	11%

Question 15: Are there places in town you'd like to walk to but can't access by sidewalk or trail? (See Appendix A for full list of comments)

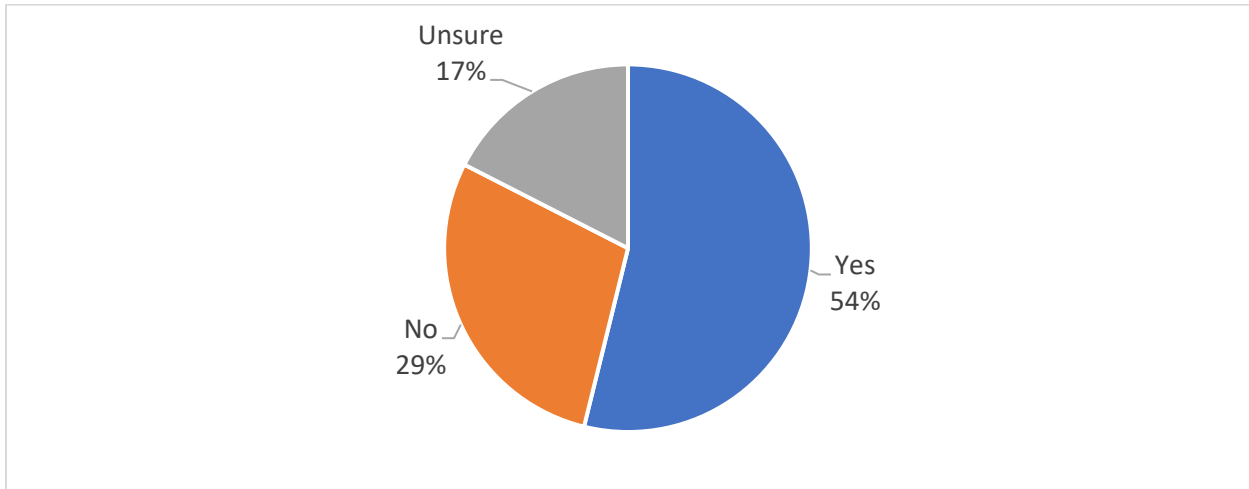
Question 16: If you find it difficult to get around and/or rarely leave your home, please check all the reasons that apply.



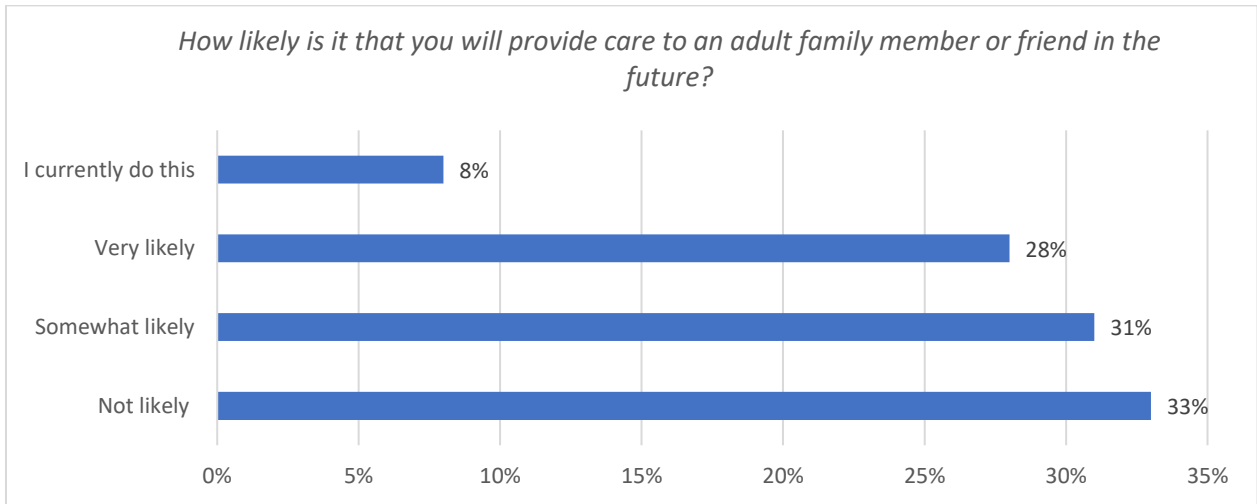
Question 17: Which of the following services do you use in your community?

	I use	Available, I don't use	Not Available	Not sure if available
In-person medical services	64%	18%	4%	14%
Telehealth medical services	43%	43%	1%	13%
Substance use disorder-recovery services	1%	37%	5%	57%
Dental care services	72%	22%	1%	5%
Vision care services	63%	26%	3%	8%
Meals on Wheels weekday delivery of meals to homes	1%	46%	5%	48%
Weekday luncheons for seniors	1%	18%	11%	71%
In-home healthcare services	0%	40%	4%	56%
In-home personal care help	0%	40%	4%	56%
In-home help with tasks like housekeeping, cooking, groceries	7%	35%	4%	54%
Early childhood education/preschool/daycare	4%	55%	5%	35%
After school care	2%	54%	4%	40%
Youth summer day camps	4%	62%	3%	30%
Teen center	1%	30%	13%	55%

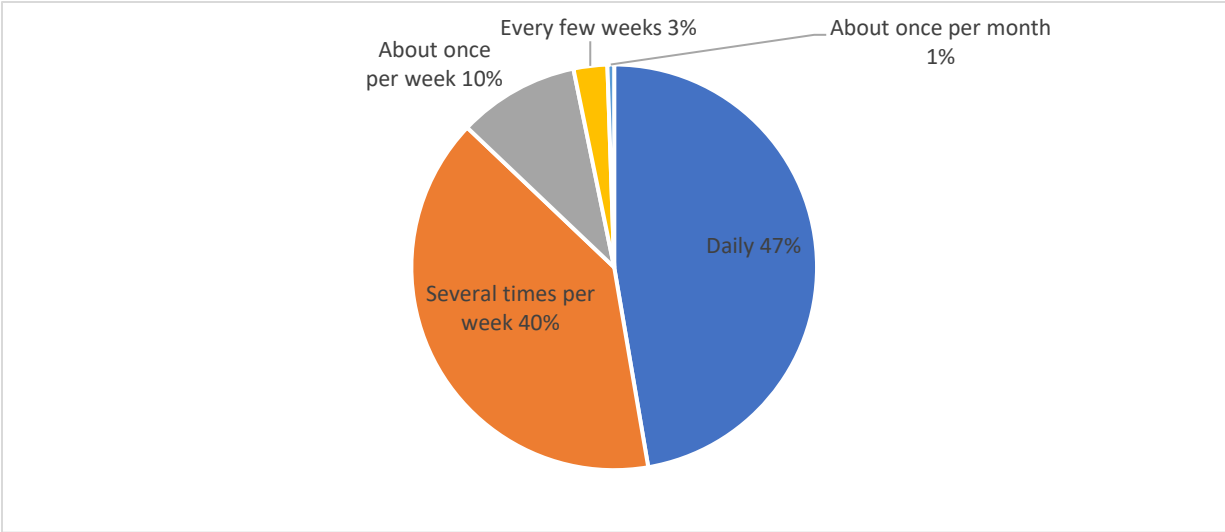
Question 18: Do you have friends or family nearby who can provide you with assistance now or in the future for things like running errands, transportation, cooking, and self-care?



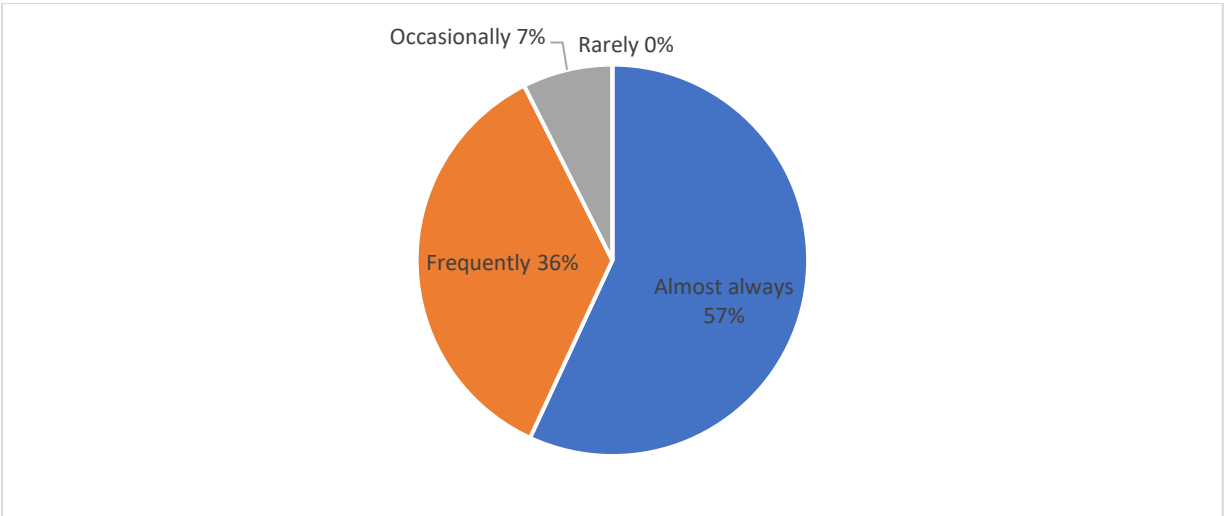
Question 19: How likely is it that you will provide care to an adult family member or friend in the future?



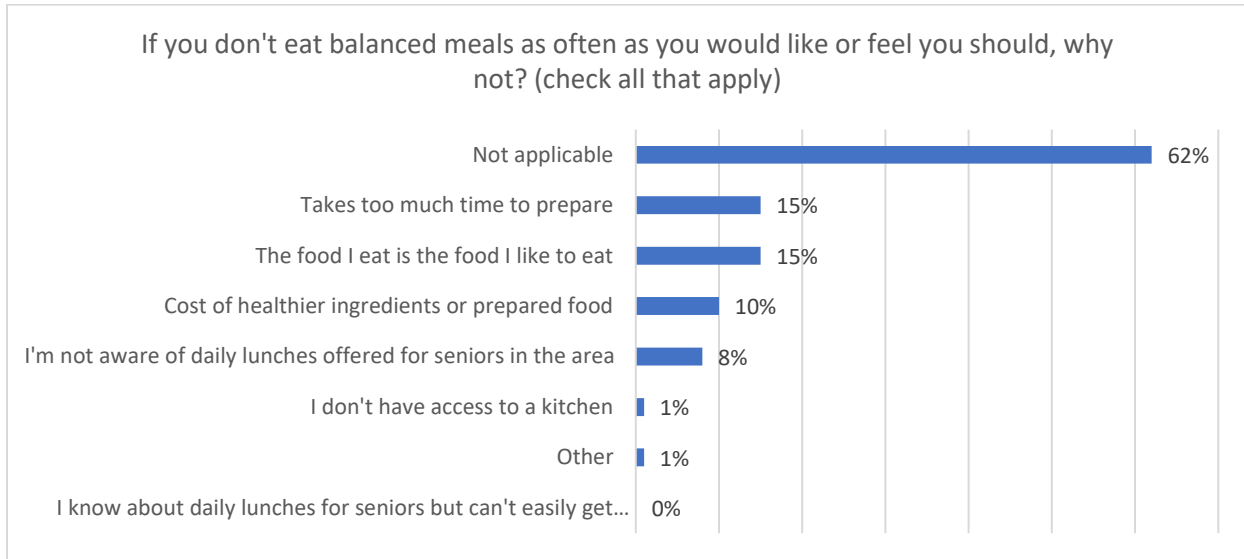
Question 20: How frequently do you engage in some form of physical activity?



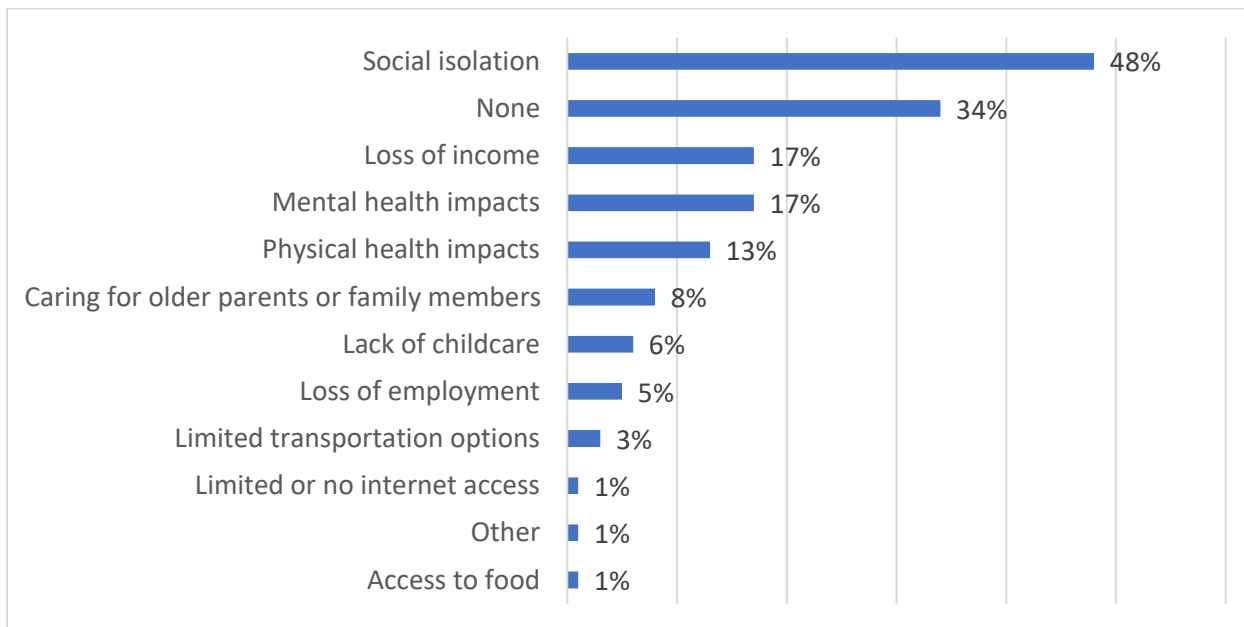
Question 21: How frequently do you eat nutritious meals?



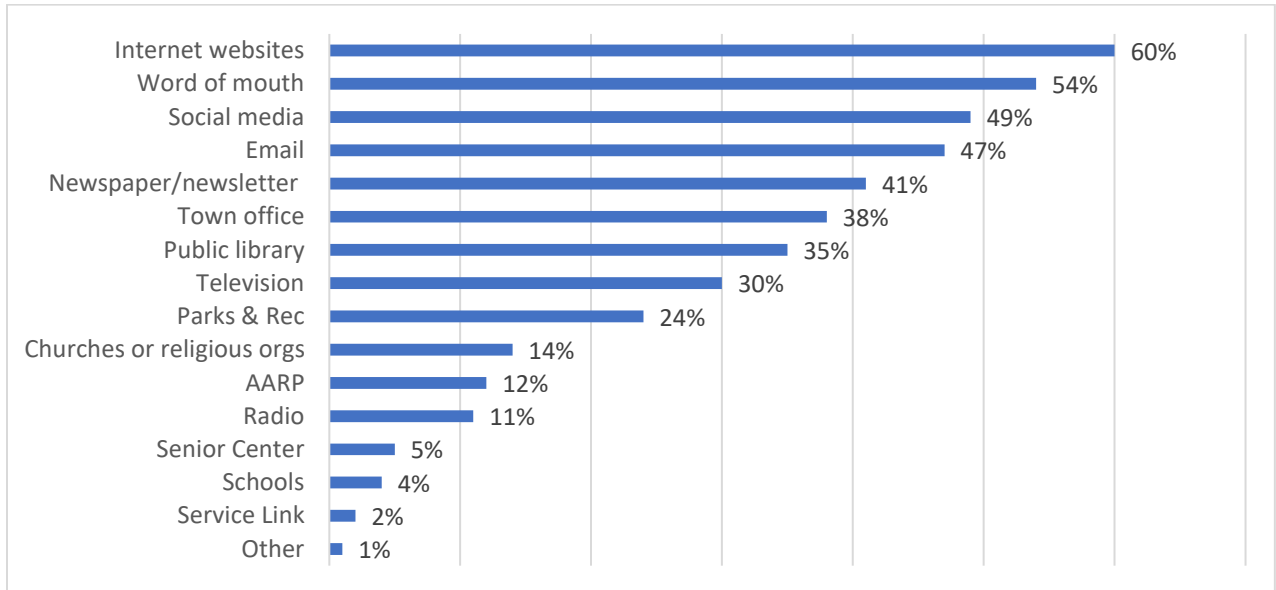
Question 22: If you don't eat balanced meals as often as you would like or feel you should, why not? (check all that apply)



Question 23: Which if any of the following challenges have you or your household faced due to COVID19? (check all that apply)



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

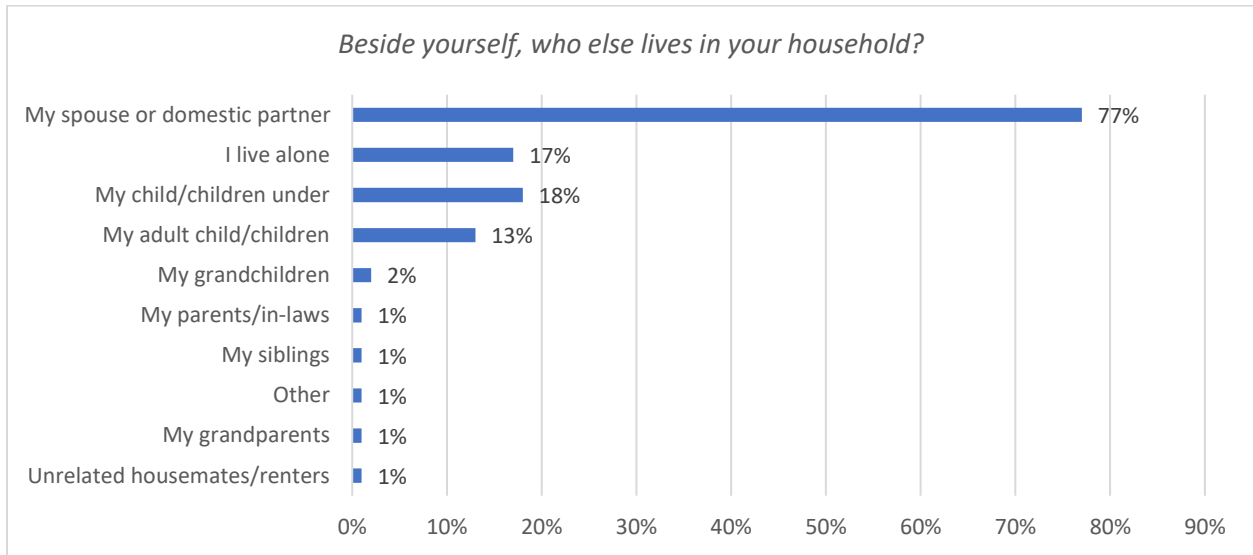


Question 25: Which of the following do you use in your community?

	I use	Available, I don't use	Not available	Not sure if available
Volunteer/ community service opportunities	26%	39%	1%	34%
Trails, conservation land, natural areas	69%	30%	0%	1%
Playgrounds, ball fields, swimming pools	29%	61%	4%	6%
Sidewalks and bike paths	13%	29%	44%	14%
Concerts, dances, socials	8%	17%	25%	50%
Veterans services	5%	22%	11%	62%
Restaurants/coffee shops/stores	90%	7%	2%	2%
Fitness centers, exercise classes, rec sports	20%	48%	5%	27%
Community centers, Boys & Girls Club, YMCA (youth, young adult, family)	9%	18%	39%	34%
Senior center or activities for older adults	7%	38%	31%	24%
Social/civic groups (book clubs, garden clubs, Lions, Kiwanis, VFW)	17%	67%	3%	13%
Continuing education/ learning opportunities	13%	42%	16%	29%
Churches or other places of worship	48%	50%	2%	0%
Food pantry	7%	84%	0%	9%
Town welfare office	5%	75%	2%	18%
Internet access at public locations (library, town hall)	24%	62%	2%	11%
Libraries	24%	62%	2%	11%

Question 26: How satisfied are you with town services in Stratham? (Full comment summary in Appendix)

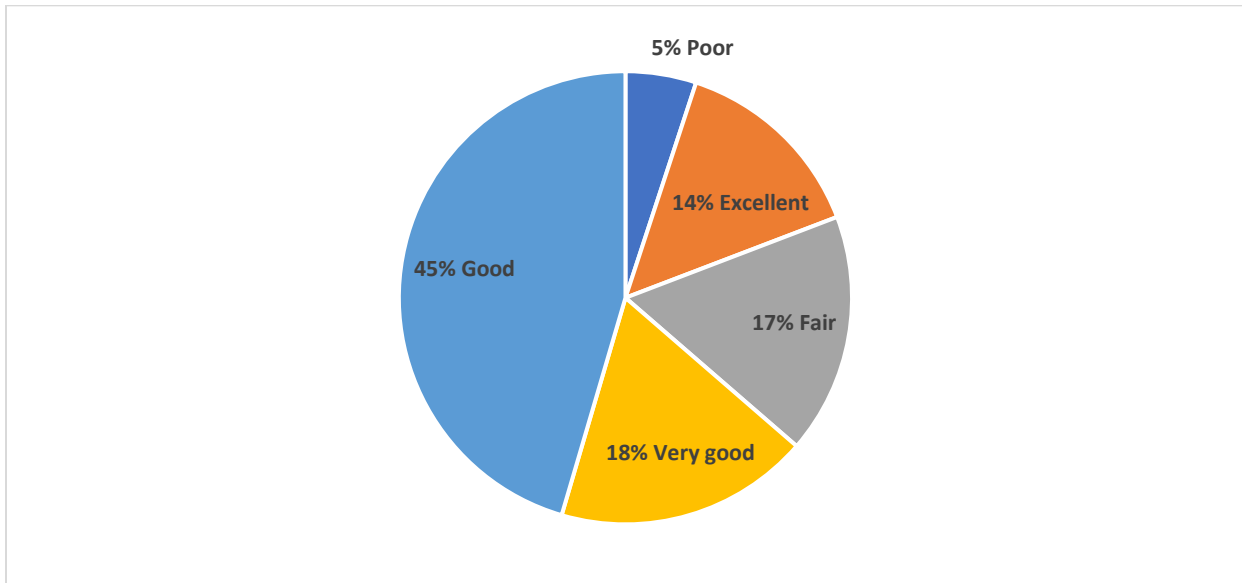
Question 27: Besides yourself, how else lives in your household? (check all that apply).



The majority of survey respondents (77%) indicated that they live with a spouse or domestic partner. 17% live alone.

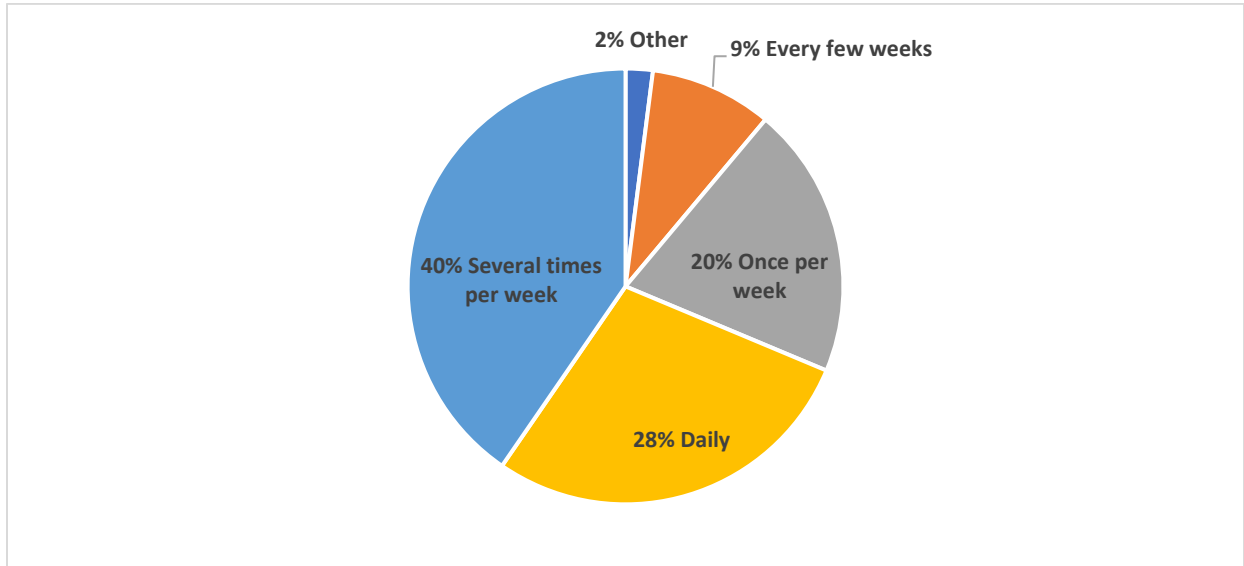
Question 28: How would you rate your social life?

Most survey respondents rated their social lives as “good,” or “very good.”



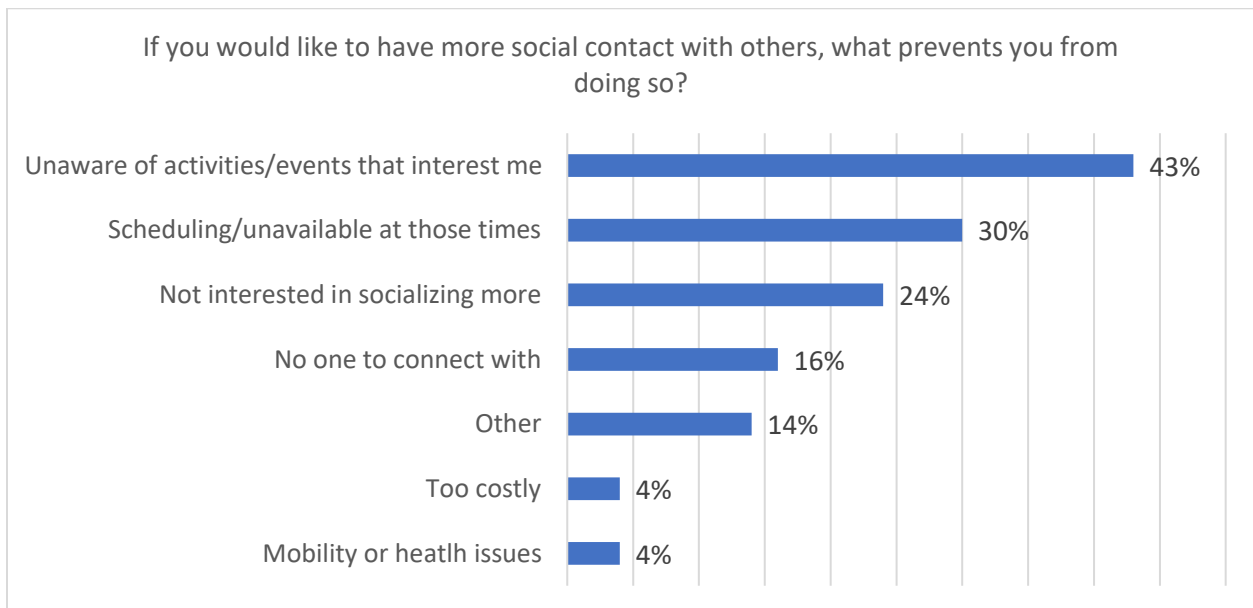
Question 29: How often do you have contact with family, friends or neighbors who do not live with you?

Most survey respondents indicated that they have contact with family, friends, or neighbors who do not live with them several times per week (40%) with 28% indicating they have daily contact with others who do not live with them.



Question 30: If you would like to have more social contact with others, what prevents you from doing so? (check all that apply).

Most survey respondents identified lack of knowledge or awareness on activities or events (43%) as well as scheduling and timing (30%) as the top barriers that prevents them from socializing with others.

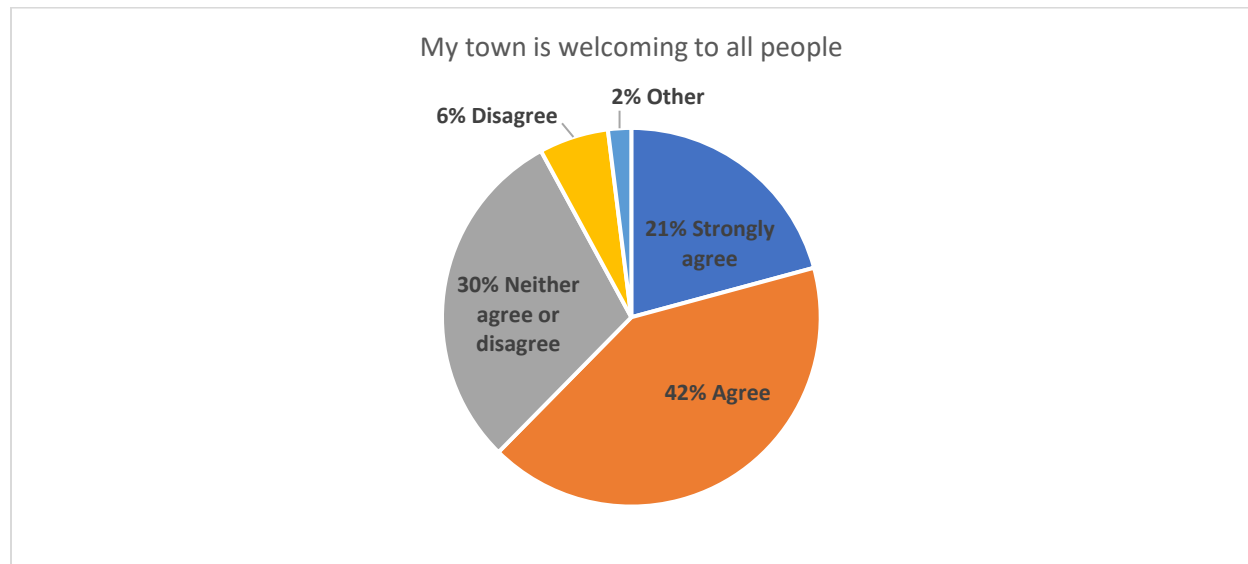


Question 31: Do you feel accepted in your town with regard to:

Most survey respondents feel accepted in Stratham regarding spirituality or religious affiliation, political views, age, sexuality, gender identify, race or ethnicity and economic status.

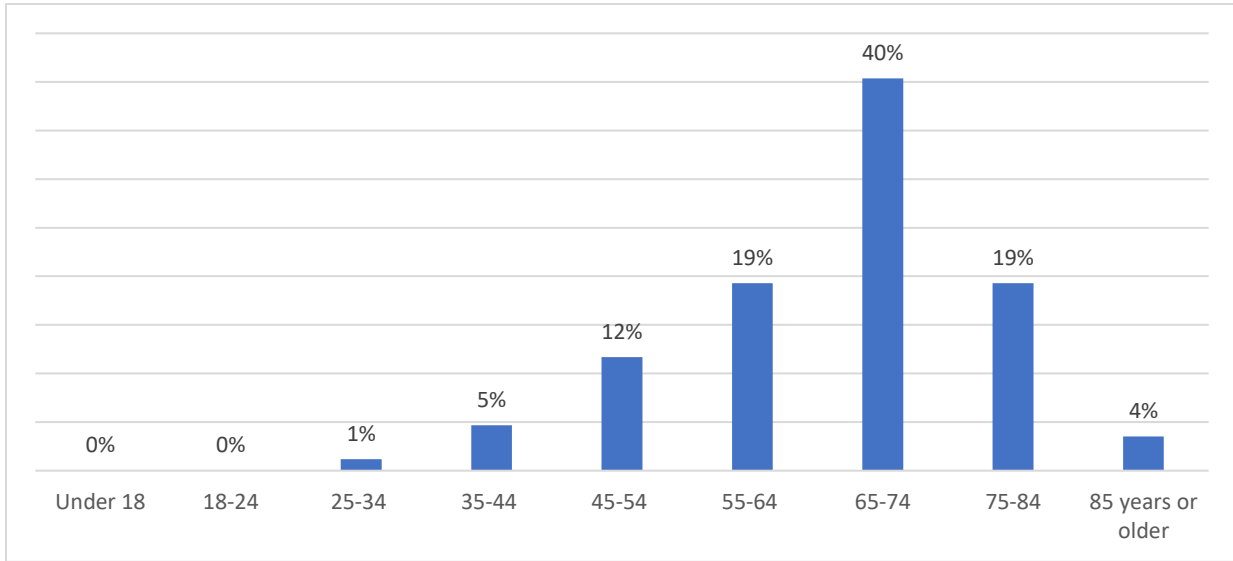
	Yes	Somewhat	No	N/A
Spirituality or religious affiliation	53%	12%	4%	32%
Political views	42%	38%	6%	14%
Age	64%	25%	5%	6%
Sexuality	69%	7%	2%	23%
Gender Identity	68%	6%	2%	24%
Race and ethnicity	76%	5%	1%	18%
Economic status	70%	15%	2%	12%

Question 32: My town is welcoming to all people



Most survey respondents indicated that Stratham is welcoming to all people (42%). However, a significant number of respondents had no opinion (30%).

Question 33: What is your age?

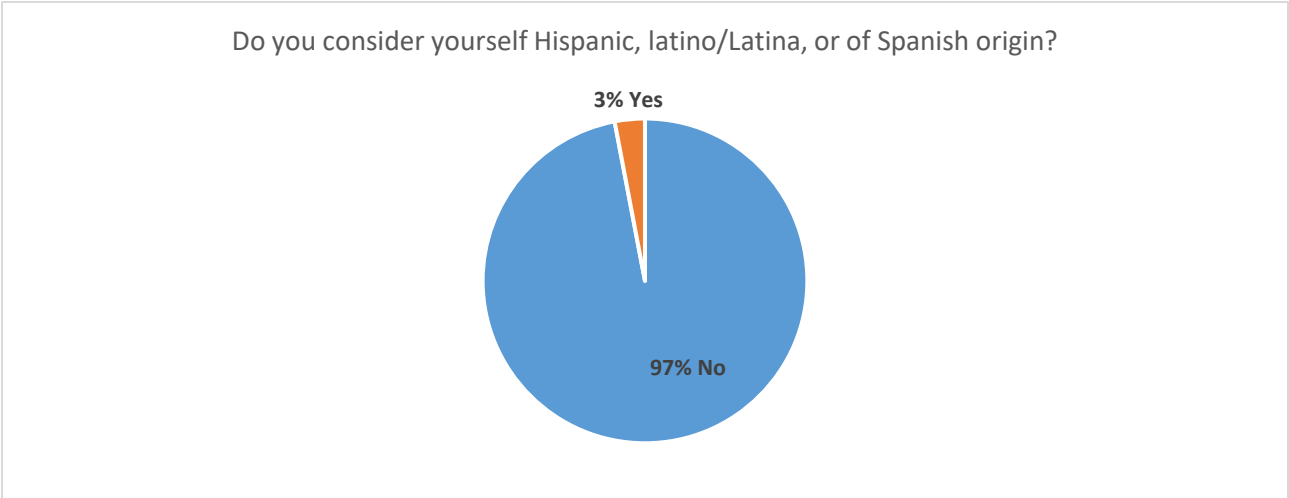


The majority of survey respondents were ages 65-74 years old (40%).

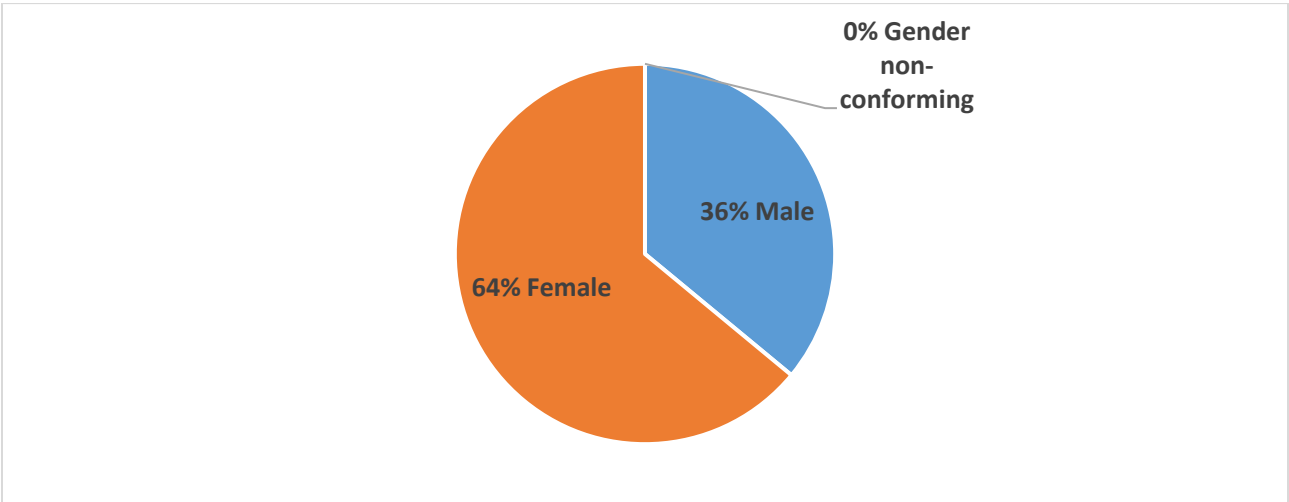
Question 34: What race(s) do you identify with? (Check all that apply)

What is your race?	
White	97%
Other	2%
American Indian or Alaska Native	1%
Asian	1%
Black or African American	0%
Native hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	0%
Middle Eastern or North African	0%

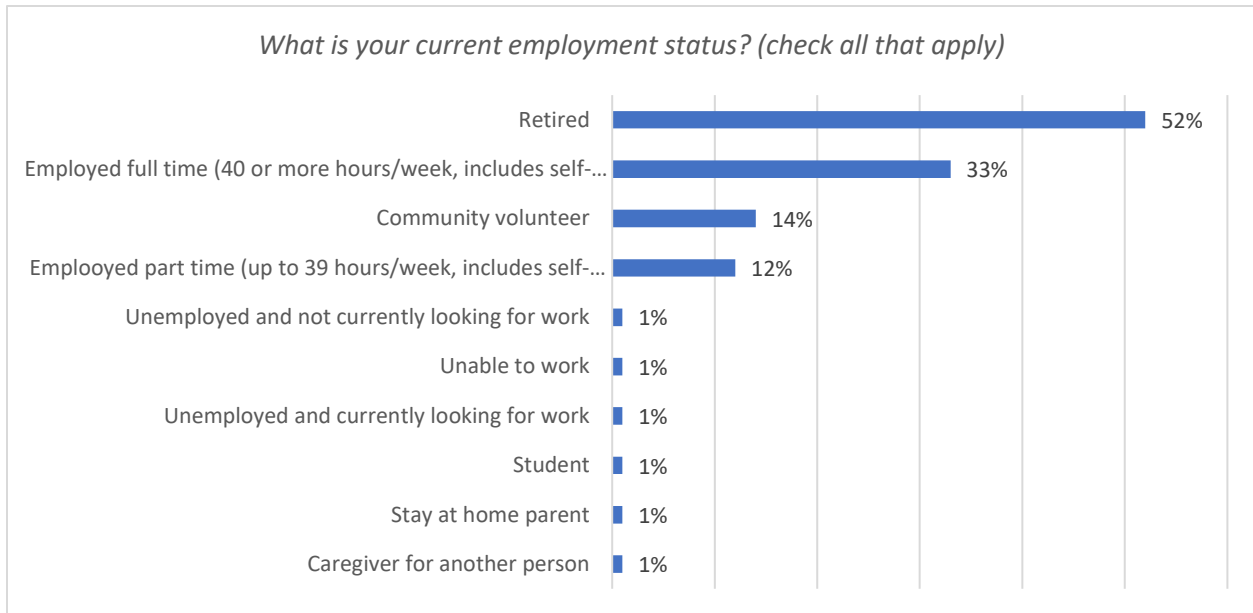
Question 35: Do you consider yourself Hispanic, Latino/Latina, or of Spanish origin?



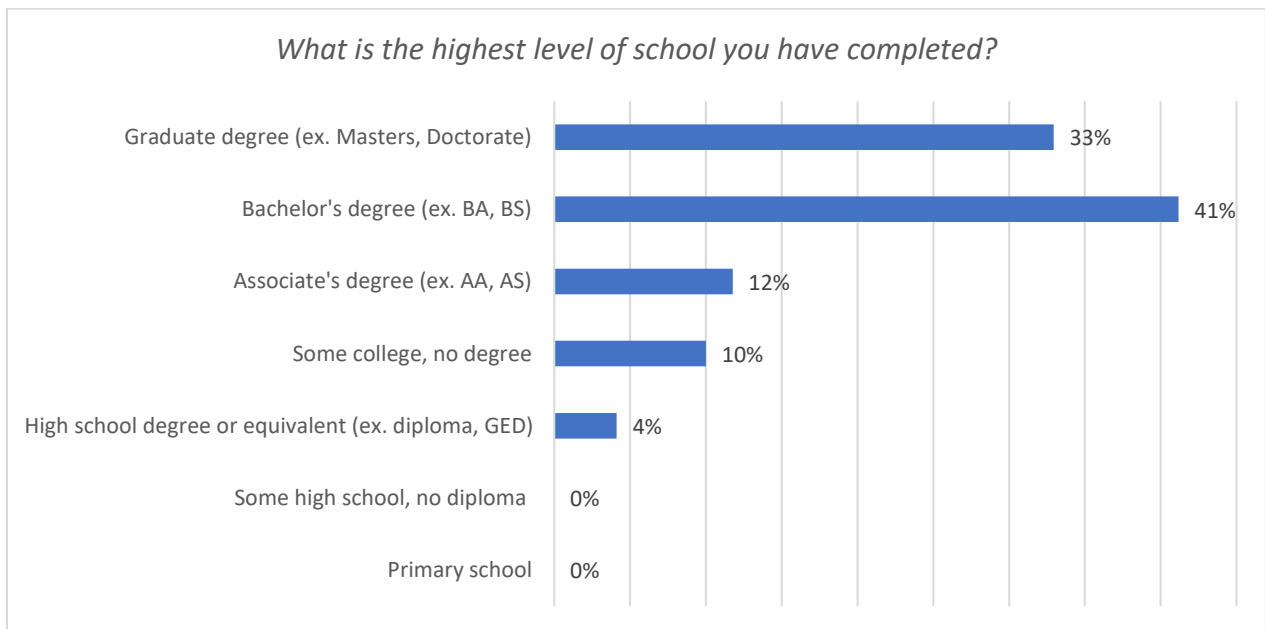
Question 36: What is your gender?



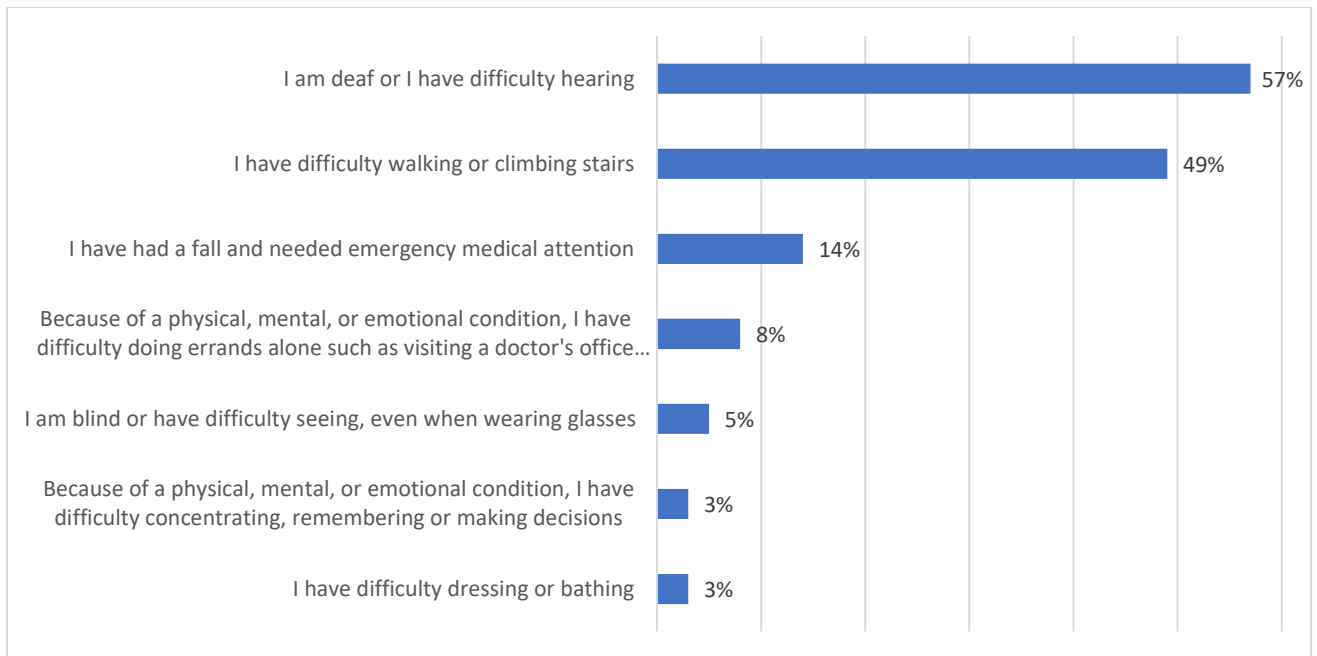
Question 37: What is your current employment status? (check all that apply)



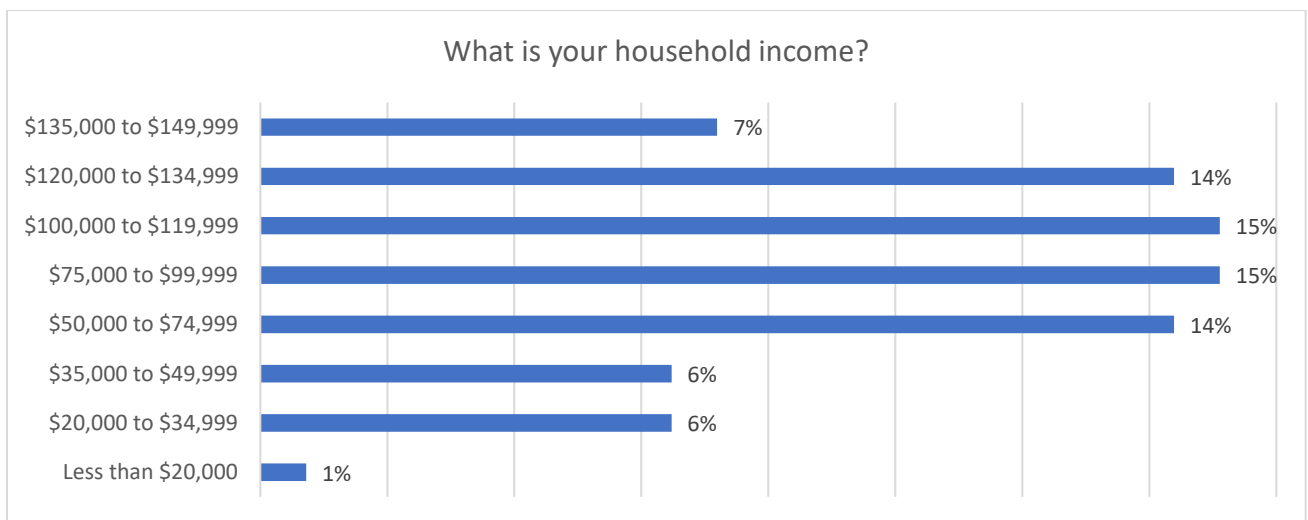
Question 38: What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed? (If you are currently enrolled in school, please indicate the level of study completed so far).



Question 39: Please check all that apply to you:



Question 40: What is your household income?



Question 41: Do you have any additional comments about aging and livability in your town or the broader region? (Full comment summary at end of the report).

Survey Comments

Question 8) Regarding the concerns you noted in the previous question, what changes would help?

1. As I haven't yet had need, I don't know if this exists but a central office/senior center with all the information needed to live in Stratham safely and conveniently as I age and a walkable living situation with shopping and recreational and social activities.
2. Town staff who specialize in senior services.
3. Geography can't be helped, global warming notwithstanding!
4. Available shopping/appointment transportation, affordable in house services
5. Multiple level assisted living
6. Programs and activities for retired folks, travel, or event programs with transportation. I am very physically active and able but also look 10-15 years ahead transportation need then, and possibly in-home services would be important
7. More social outreach, a community center for seniors
8. A center devoted to senior citizens encouraging fitness, creativity, travel, dancing, education and healthy activities like hikes, walks and pickle ball. I have been waiting to get in a class in Stratham for five years!
9. Over 55 condo & HOA community residents pay the same taxes as other residents but receive less services. As the value of retirement savings dwindle, we have to pay to have our streets plowed and maintained. This is age discrimination. We are not a drain on the school systems and do much volunteer work. We should receive the same service as other residents or tax credits in value to serviced we do not receive. There should be a vibrant senior center where older adults can socialize and participate in age-appropriate activities together. Stratham offers very little of this.
10. Being sure our town and country adhere to the US Constitution and that we retain freedom of speech for all. Not allowing socialism and/or communism into our country. Allowing only legal immigration and not allowing illegal immigration. Allowing only legal residents to vote. Ensuring the integrity of our voting system.
11. Income and Age-related housing options
12. Transportation options
13. Having public transportations would help to seek resources older people need.
14. Ensuring taxes don't continue to go through the roof.
15. Stratham is getting old, stingy, and in supportive of anyone that's not old and well off. They don't support sidewalks, kids' programs, skate parks, schools, any new Facilities. They do supper trash cans, and senior centers. I would not raise my children here if I chose to do it again. Other young communities are kinder such as Exeter, Dover, Hampton, Portsmouth. It's unfortunate. Such a great town with potential. But everyone feels selfish at town meeting. Maybe it's the governance style.
16. Reasonably priced transportation. Right now, I drive. When I'm eventually unable to drive, I have no idea how I'll get to stores, medical appointments, entertainment, recreation, etc.

17. There is a shortage of experienced family doctors for elderly as we have tried to find physicians for over 2 years but are forced to keep our GP in MA almost 1 hour away.
18. Retirement/assisted living/nursing home facility if needed
19. I've found that having a social network is important to engaging the mind and body in a fun and healthy way. Example is the community that comes together multiple days a week to play pickleball at all levels. Just one example to enhance community.
20. The high property taxes are a worry for us.
21. Volunteers to assist with driving or taking me shopping, to a MD appt or take me to the beach.
22. I don't think the Town can do much about in home care. And without water/sewer in the commercial district suitable housing near to shopping and restaurants is not going to happen.
23. Affordable one floor housing with grounds (for walking and some gardening and looking at) and attached garage. Not in a large apartment building or next to a highway. Low-cost transportation options for shopping purposes, appointments, going to library or church etc.
24. Day out programs with nursing on site for seniors with dementia and other needs so spouse/ family members can receive some respite time during the day
25. Finding affordable housing - smaller properties cost more than sale of existing property. Maintain 1.5 acres of current property and winter weather.
26. Social opportunities for the handicapped
27. Reduction in real estate taxes for retirees based on their 1099 only.
28. Local bus stops connecting with Amtrak trains and Portsmouth buses.
29. public transportation
30. Affordable housing and accessibility of safe, reliable transportation remain issues for the entire Seacoast, including Stratham.
31. I suspect I'll remain in my large family home because of lack of appropriate housing for seniors. I am not in a position to afford a facility such as Riverwoods. Public transportation is essentially nonexistent in the Stratham area.
32. More focus from the town on the elderly (Rec Department)
33. Greater systems to make folks aware and that such services exist.
34. Lack of sidewalks and biking lanes to stay active
35. higher and more generous elderly tax exemption
36. Transportation options for the elderly.
37. Same struggle with everyone with bridging health insurance- the town could offer a group healthcare plan for residents over 50. Hopefully, that would secure a better rate and Stratham could offer to help fund if possible. Offer group trips for older people that need accommodations.
38. The town of Stratham needs to offer elderly housing for those who want to move out of their larger homes and stay within the community they raised their families. Stop building million-dollar homes.

39. Lower my property taxes. I'm on a fixed income and Stratham has high taxes.
40. Please keep and expand accessible green space like SHP. Venues that all ages can gather and enjoy. STOP building cluster drop down subdivisions
41. Having these services more affordable for seniors
42. Unfortunately, you can't increase family in the area. Keeping the town popular with the young adults might get the kids to settle back home eventually.
43. More social activities for seniors
44. A place for long term residents to live when they can no longer maintain a single-family home. This option needs to be really affordable.
45. Transportation most of all
46. senior reduction on taxes
47. there is no affordable public transportation readily available. senior housing is far too costly.
48. The town doesn't have sidewalks to allow walking or biking safely. You have to be able to drive to get to a gyn.
49. No real senior services are currently available in Stratham!
50. Making it easier for older adults to stay in their home safely and at decreased cost
51. Good transportation options are crucial to being able to maintain social activities and access to shopping and medical care
52. I'm not aware of which services may be currently available for seniors
53. Letting people add-on to their first floor living space. Adding safe transportation from Stratham to Portsmouth and to Exeter. Having active senior groups in town - senior book club, a memory cafe, a walking or yoga club, social events that aren't tied to churches, etc.
54. no changes in services provided by the Town would help except for a change in property tax structure for elderly residents
55. lower tax rate for seniors, like why should we pay for kids schooling when we don't have kids anymore
56. Decreasing cost of in-home support services, access to public transportation vehicles within neighborhoods
57. Decreasing cost of in-home support services, access to public transportation vehicles within neighborhoods one second ago
58. Affordable housing! Rentals and house prices are unreasonable and outrageous. As we get older and fixed incomes become a reality, housing becomes a real concern.
59. Allowing additional businesses to help lower taxes
60. Having a sidewalk from O'Brien's down to Exeter sidewalks along Portsmouth Avenue
61. Community center / library availability
62. Recently moved to the Stratham area, choose this area and state because of the natural environmental beauty. In our previous state, we saw open land developed into endless Targets, Walmarts, fast-food establishments, strip malls and car dealerships. Please realize the land in the seacoast area and all of New Hampshire needs to be protected. When we receive the Stratham magazine, the cover is always featuring nature. Careful - protect your natural resources now and for the future.

63. Stratham has no center. Opportunities to meet people is challenging unless you have children.
64. A few times a week having transportation to get around. More social events too.
65. We aren't going to be able to afford living here, the taxes will drain any money we have. As we pass the magical age of 65 we need affordable housing in town so that we can stay here. We won't be able to otherwise.
66. Housing affordability would be the number one change. As housing gets more unaffordable for working middle class in Stratham, I'm concerned about the cost once I am on a fixed income
67. More transportation options (mini-vans or smaller buses to provide a way for seniors to attend cultural, historical, entertainment, and scenic places of interest)
68. More senior housing, community activities, transportation
69. Tax break for senior citizens
70. Having affordable in-home support services
71. Some kind of break on taxes for seniors
72. Having a stronger senior center would help.
73. more access to public transportation
74. Making free or low-cost transportation for wheelchair or just old people to doctor or grocery shopping.
75. Self-driving vehicles. More organizations of volunteer drivers like TASC. A national immigration policy that allows workers to enter the country who are willing to do in-home support services.
76. Organized on-call Services for rides to appts, grocery delivery, increase senior exercise programs, create cozy gathering space for senior center.
77. Having easily accessed public transportation.
78. Transportation options are very important for folks who cannot drive any longer.
79. Highly rated school system to keep family here
80. Reasonably priced yard maintenance help, ride to doctor appointments, building of smaller homes in area
81. Better communications/information about the availability of in-home support services in Stratham.
82. Do not add sidewalks in town. If people want sidewalks go one town over to Exeter, or two towns over to a bigger town Portsmouth
83. More affordable housing for young (20-30) and older (70-0n) More community programs for all ages. More transportation options. Having more recreation areas- for nature walks , swimming, exercise classes.
84. Affordable housing for seniors, more senior activities provided,and transportation.
85. Build a town center with walkable retail, medical, and health/beauty services. Offer a tax structure to shelter the aging population as they no longer have children in school.
86. Having a local outlet where these services can be accessed meaning, not in Exeter or surrounding towns: here in Stratham.

87. Stratham offers very little of these services
88. Affordable senior housing. Public transportation
89. Converting vacant school in 33 to elderly housing!
90. Homes for aging in place.
91. being able to contact a service for rides when needed to grocery store and doctor appointments
92. Offer subsidized living expenses and discounts to the elderly population
93. Having vans/buses available to transport seniors to various sections of town for medical appointments, food shopping, restaurants, social events, etc
94. Pricing of homes currently is currently not helping younger people/parents get into this community to put down roots and raise their families. My friends were looking at nearby towns to move to because they are having a child and want to purchase a home and Stratham is out of their price range. We are not seeing an influx of younger people in the town near us in order to make friends with. There's a large influx of older folks everywhere around Stratham.
95. State supported in home medical services and yard care
96. Elderly with a savings for retirement should have a much larger allotment for reduction of tax liability. The costs of just maintenance of a home, especially an older one, can wipe out the savings or retirement funds. If the funds are used for necessary repairs, the taxes go up. It's a no win situation. No wonder the homes of the elderly are allowed to just deteriorate.
97. Senior one level housing Transportation
98. None at this time
99. Central place to get info on in-home support services and recreational/social opportunities on town website and inside town hall.
100. Affordable home services
101. Providing public transportation or a volunteer-based transportation service would help older residents significantly.
102. Better transportation options
103. Access to affordable in-home services. Ensuring that I could get public transportation to grocery stores, doctor appointments, and community activities.
104. This area is expensive. More affordable options
105. Knowing there are trained people to come into our home to provide care. I have thought of the possibility of having a program at the Tech School in Exeter specifically offering a degree in providing home care. Transportation to appointments.
106. Knowing there is a plan to provide the services about which I am concerned.
107. Reliable public transportation for seniors.
108. Affordable one story over 55 housing
109. More transportation options.

110.	I would like the option to have a smaller footprint. A smaller home with less land that is financially attainable. As a homeowner with no children, I would like to see a tax credit for older ppl with no children.
111.	Public transportation
112.	Available and affordable transportation and in-home services
113.	Stratham is a young family community. It does not cater to an older generation holistically. I am in my 50s and already feel like a stranger in my own neighborhood after 22 years, due to an influx of young families. This is the natural course of a neighborhood community, in my opinion. I would not waste any town money on trying to create a senior community. It does not have either the population or the infrastructure. It has been a wonderful community to raise my kids, but is not the place I would ever choose to retire, as I would anticipate a very lonely life doing so.
114.	Affordable multi-family housing. Pedestrian-Ofriendly walking and biking routes.
115.	Public transportation
116.	Senior living facility within Stratham, availability to secure in-home assistance
117.	housing close to amenities and medical care
118.	I'm just not aware of what all is available for older people other than Stratham Hill Park
119.	Lower cost of health insurance
120.	Sidewalks along Portsmouth Ave

Question 15) Are there places in town you'd like to walk to but can't access by sidewalk or trail?

1.	One of the problems with my housing location is that there aren't any shopping or recreational activities in walking distance
2.	No (21 total)
3.	most are only accessible by driving. Stratham hill is accessible but crossing 33 on foot is risky.
4.	Everywhere!!!
5.	Route 33 / Portsmouth ave in Stratham needs sidewalks. Not safe to walk on side of road
6.	Yes. Very few sidewalks make walking more difficult, especially in poor weather conditions.
7.	Stratham Hill Park
8.	Walking with small children or pets is scary
9.	All!
10.	Yes. Scamman conservation land was closed despite the town purchase. It is against the CR to close it but they do what they want and the town goes along with it.
11.	No, my home abuts the park and town center

12. Stratham is not set up like Exeter or Portsmouth. We didn't move here to "walk to town". We wanted the rural town it was.
13. There are no sidewalks where I live
14. Because there are few sidewalks in town, I find it necessary to drive to other towns (Exeter) to walk or to some of the developments in Stratham to walk safely.
15. Not at present
16. Retail shops grocery stores reataurants
17. There are no sidewalks in Stratham
18. EVERYWHERE!!
19. there are no sidewalks in my neighborhood - cars always driving 10-15 mph above 35mph speed limit. dangerous to bicycle
20. We don't have a "downtown" and trails are too difficult for me.
21. Waterfront
22. Stratham has few sidewalks. I've walked from the municipal building to downtown Exeter and it is a dangerous and very unpleasant walk the entire length.
23. Not sure
24. The whole town.
25. Main roads
26. squamscott road/winnicutt road/bunker hill/lovell
27. Everywhere
28. When we finally have a town center, it would be helpful to extend the sidewalk system out toward trails they can meet up with them
29. Yes, Stratham Hill Park. The town of Stratham is divided by a major highway and access is NOT provided to cross safely to our amazing park.
30. My Own Road
31. Need safer cycle access throughout
32. My own street
33. Yes
34. There are no sidewalks on most of the roads.
35. Where are the sidewalks in Stratham? I can't say I have seen any
36. n/a - I drive
37. Town Offices, Library, Grocery stores
38. We don't have sidewalks in 95%of the town.
39. EVERYWHERE

40. the grocery store, bank
41. Depot road needs a sidewalk on one side. So dangerous walking now.
42. Guinea Road!
43. Bunker Hill Ave is busy enough to need a sidewalk and people drive faster on the road than they should.
44. Bunker Hill Ave
45. There are only the "sidewalks to nowhere" in Stratham town center, no sidewalks anywhere else. Route 33 is way too dangerous to walk or ride a bike, in my opinion, especially at 67 yrs. old!
46. I like walking a lot so I go to the Park every day, sometimes 2-3 times a day.
47. It would be fantastic to have a sidewalk from O'Briens all the way to Exeter and some cross walks across Portsmouth ave would be helpful.
48. Yes, I would like to be able to walk safely along Portsmouth Ave and part of 33 (up to O'Briens or Barker's farm stand)
49. No real walking destinations except Stratham Hill Park
50. Yes
51. We do not have sidewalks in our town.
52. There is no public sidewalks in Stratham
53. Yes, there are town parks and shopping areas that I would like to walk to, but the traffic and lack of sidewalks or trails makes that dangerous to do.
54. FROM HOME TO DOWNTOWN
55. Lots. I love walking but it doesn't feel very safe in Stratham because of the lack of sidewalks.
56. around the backroads in the area, without having to worry about fast / distracted/ drivers
57. no. rural zoning = no sidewalks. If I wanted walkability I would have moved to a different location.
58. Many roads don't have sidewalks and it would be nice to have some.
59. Road sides not enough shoulders for comfortable walking or Biking.
60. Yes. A sidewalk from Emery Ln to Market Basket would be a nice addition
61. We should increase walkability of Stratham, including adding sidewalks where possible.
62. most side roads do not have sidewalks
63. None. I can get everywhere without sidewalks
64. Farms and shopping.
65. We don't have a proper sidewalk system in our town. My husband walks for exercise daily and is required to walk in the street (winnicut, high streets). The one sidewalk we have in town goes no where and ends abruptly. Why not continue the sidewalk to the shopping plazas and install proper crosswalks at the lights on Rt 33? I'd love to see Winnicutt widened to safely allow for walking and bike travel. Currently, It's treacherous, I've almost gotten hit by a car. It's awful.

66. Many of Stratham's side roads are too narrow to ride a bike on safely. Many motorists care less about the clearance rule. I have been struck by mirrors on vehicles twice on Bunker Hill ave and many more times on Winnicutt road. There just isn't enough room and the shoulder is in most cases a deep drop-off which is dangerous for cycle enthusiasts.
67. Yes, nearby elementary school
68. Stratham Hill Park. The library.
69. Up and down Portsmouth Ave. from the Exeter line to Stratham Hill Park. Up and down Bunker Hill Ave.
70. Up and down Portsmouth Ave. from the Exeter line to Stratham Hill Park. Up and down Bunker Hill Ave. Very dangerous walking without sidewalks.
71. Everywhere residential. Walking around neighborhoods or on main streets (Stratham Heights Road) is treacherous
72. High Street
73. Almost everywhere
74. I live off Rte. 108 but am not comfortable walking or jogging on 108
75. Portsmouth Ave. Bunker Hill.
76. Live too far away to walk to places and too much traffic
77. None that affect me at present.
78. Bunker Hill but no side walks
79. The Post Office
80. Main roads would be so much more conducive to safely walking if there were sidewalks or even a bike trail.
81. [respondent left blank]
82. No walking trails to access the food shopping in Stratham, must walk along 33/108
83. Stratham Hill Park, everything else is too far to walk
84. There are places I would like to ride a bike but not safe-e.g., route 33
85. Yes, along Portsmouth Ave

26) How satisfied are you with town services in Stratham (Parks & Recreation, Library, Town Administration, Planning & Zoning, Police, etc.)? Where could the town improve?

1. Not sure since I haven't really been going anywhere or mixing with other people for 2 years now. Covid safety is of paramount importance since I have young grandchildren not old enough to be vaccinated and also want to be mindful of other vulnerable people.
2. Good work

3. Senior services. There is nothing.
4. Town Hall is functional, and staff are great, but the building is embarrassingly ugly. The library staff and collection is excellent, but again, the building could really use some work. Police are excellent but they seem to cluster on Rt 108/33.
5. fairly satisfied
6. more online classes, workshops....and in person, as Covid becomes less of a concern
7. Fair. They cater mostly to young children
8. Very satisfied. Could use proper walking along 33 and/or bike paths. Traffic very close to side of road and very fast.
9. Offer more senior activities. Provide better meeting spaces and services.
10. Need more than a few classes and a small meeting place. Ideal: an indoor pool, senior center with creative classes.
11. Limited for age groups
12. Stratham hill park trails are wonderful.
13. Very satisfied with Stratham Town services
14. The rec program is one of the strongest elements of the town. That and SHP.
15. Satisfied
16. Good town. What happened to senior center?
17. Seem to do a good job or try to offer services. As our town population grows older we are definitely going to need retirement facilities that are reasonably affordable.
18. Excellent but would love to have a few dedicated pickleball courts for outdoor play and social gatherings.
19. I am happy with the town; I am just concerned when I cannot drive. I have an eye disease.
20. Would like places to walk, too dangerous along Rte. 33, could have more Senior programs
21. Generally the town is doing a good job. Recognizing and protecting historic houses etc. has improved. I do not like that Stratham has become a place for people with above average incomes.
22. The Parks & Recreation Department in Stratham has done an excellent job of increasing activities for Seniors in the area (EX. the weekly Art class). In terms of town improvement, I have mentioned on several occasion that there is a lack of affordable housing for Seniors in Stratham. The recent development that was built at Rollins Farm was originally designed to be single family condos that would be within a reasonable price range. What resulted was \$600-700K homes that were purchased by folks from MA and surrounding communities...virtually none of us in Stratham who had seen this as a possible answer to our housing needs were able to take advantage of it. Sadly, we have not seen any movement in that area.
23. Have enjoyed a few trips for seniors... Portland symphony, King Arthur baking, etc. Would like to see more of these available and advertised more widely.
24. Satisfied. Planning for future balanced growth

25. Fair. The Town Taxes \$\$\$ and winter weather are factors that will force us to move out of state
26. Satisfied
27. I would like to receive emails regarding senior activities.
28. Those department's employees and volunteers seem to me to be committed to their mission. Parks and Recreation have been very helpful to me when I've inquired.
29. satisfied, but speed limit on RT33 could be better enforced.
30. Very satisfied in general.
31. Services are very good for the size of our community.
32. More communication
33. Access to affordable childcare and preschool options
34. Very
35. The town could improve by changing zoning on parts of Portsmouth Ave to mixed use. The town could improve by having more basketball courts or not covering the only one with an ice rink every winter. The town could improve by not allowing pickup game gym use for any/every group of adults (usually 2 or fewer) over organized youth teams in tournaments and in ranked leagues at SMS. The town could improve with a rec center and youth association. The town could improve with a full-time fire department. The town could improve by offering a higher elderly tax exemption.
36. Create pedestrian friendly and bike friendly major roadways.
37. I hate the amount of salt that is dumped on the roads in Stratham, especially dead-end roads, there's often a pile left. It's wasteful and really bad for the environment. I look forward to having a small-town center, and I look forward to it slowing the amount of traffic coming down 33 from 101.
38. They need to improve communication. I find it difficult to find answers on the town's website.
39. Love the Rec Dept. Unfortunately, the activities that interest me are mostly during normal working hours
40. Wish there were more senior opportunities. I am happy with the town services that we have.
41. Need more activities, classes, bus trips etc. for retired adults.
42. Grow the current commercial district (allow water & sewer in that zone) and stop pushing commerce int the residential areas.
43. Very satisfied, library is especially great. Would appreciate some focus on families and children more. Many adults with children do not have as much time for some of the town gatherings and planning due to the town meeting style governance and therefor there is more representation from seniors than working people with children.
44. They do a good job with family/child type activities. Would like to see more adult activities like day trips around the state.
45. The library is amazing. I have not used others because of Covid. The town needs to improve the safety of the roads. Speeding is a problem, and the sides of the roads are narrow to safely walk on.
46. I believe town service-providers in Stratham do a good job.

47. Need improvement to provide services to the senior community.
48. Just moved here so not certain
49. SATISFIED.
50. The town does a great job of providing services to the residents. A Senior Center was being developed just before Covid hit our area. More activities there need to be planned. There is much for children-sports, etc.-but needs to be more for adults and seniors.
51. Very satisfied.
52. Senior citizens need their own center with active and just check out what is offered in Newmarket or Pelham senior centers.
53. I am satisfied. Parks & Rec and Library communicate well via email to the community.
54. very satisfied
55. Pretty satisfied.
56. I've lived in Stratham for over 40 yrs and used to be a homeowner, now I rent an apartment in Stratham. I hope to always live here but I'm concerned about housing becoming to expensive without many options.
57. Town needs to do better job with access to businesses via walking and crossing roads, sidewalks and crosswalks are very much needed on Portsmouth Ave, from circle to Exeter town line.
58. I would like biking maps and I really enjoy the library online
59. Reasonably satisfied. Don't want higher taxes.
60. Excellent library in Stratham. A small, but effectively organized offering of books/materials for any age or interest. Impressed by the library's successful efforts to write for grants and then receive the awards. Recently move to Stratham. Staff at City Hall were welcoming and made the transition easy. The mailed newsletter is informative. Appreciate the emails from Stratham. Clearly written and provides clear and concise information about what is happening. Shows earnest attempts at transparency.
61. There are probably more activities happening, I am not aware of. From the things I do know there is a variety of family and senior activities that do happen.
62. No time
63. The town could provide more transportation opportunities for seniors. Having sidewalks and walking trails would help people to get outside whenever they want without fear of traffic. Having more social events for seniors to get together would be great.
64. Great town!!
65. The services are great. We need sidewalks for safety and for a positive way to impact health.
66. Give seniors a discount on property taxes. Not happy with the way they snowplow my street.
67. Town is well run
68. fine

69. There is next to nothing for activities in Stratham
70. Well satisfied.
71. COMMUNICATION
72. As a senior single, I don't have much occasion to use these services.
73. very satisfied
74. More non sport related options for children
75. Senior trips, luncheons
76. Town Services are awesome. Key people are in the right spots, and they care about what they do with the community and who it impacts.
77. The town offices are located on a side street that makes it difficult (safety-wise) to get back on the Main Street particularly when events are occurring. There is no traffic light to help. Occasionally (thankfully) they will hire the police to help drivers get in/out of the road the town offices are located on. Regarding the town forest, I've been using that property for almost 20 years, the trails are much better and well maintained but the removal of trees is awful. It used to look like a natural forest. Now it looks like humans tore it apart. It's a shame. I'd like to see fun activities both during the day and in the evening so that people who work or not can enjoy the town parks and social activities. It's usually daytime oriented.
78. The services available are nearly always excellent here. Well-tended and maintained and always innovating, looking for a "better way" to make public access nicer.
79. Stratham provides very good town services, except when it comes to seniors.
80. very satisfied. Great library
81. Satisfied
82. Seems satisfactory
83. Very Satisfied. There are many events that happen at the Stratham Hill Park and generally the parks in the area are well-kept and maintained. The library is sufficient for the community. And I have never had any issues with the town or planning or police.
84. Town hall staff are great
85. Outstanding
86. Fairly satisfied. Town is growing very rapidly.
87. More walking areas besides track at town hall complex and SHP.
88. Very satisfied
89. Generally, very satisfied with Library and Parks & Recreation. Needed are more sidewalks and/or bike lanes, better public transportation options, resolution of water/wastewater issues which apparently limit the development of new restaurants and supermarkets in Stratham, better traffic/speed enforcement on Rte 108 between the Stratham Circle and Newfields.
90. Satisfied thus far. Continuing to expand recreational/social opportunities for older residents is very important to me.

91. Very satisfied.
92. Bike paths and sidewalks are needed.
93. They keep improving services which is good
94. Love the library. Would like to see more classes offered for seniors or trips and be able to easily find out about them.
95. The items mentioned above in reference to in-home care providers as we age and transportation opportunities when we can no longer drive.
96. Somewhat satisfied. The Town could provide more access.
97. more patrol of speeding on Rt 33
98. Currently I am satisfied with the town services. As we look to the future, I'm hopeful this survey will be used to determine what should be done especially for Seniors.
99. VERY SATISFIED
100. The services of the town in general are good and very well run. However when it comes to seniors, services are minimal or non existent. As the over 65 population continues to grow, the town should think about how they can better service this age group. Maybe the town should establish a Council on Aging and have staff dedicated to seniors.
101. Satisfied
102. Satisfied
103. Fairly satisfied
104. Spend money more focused. The town is trying to do too much, and the waste in things like updating street signs to reflect history is a ridiculous spend. Or the amount of investment in the future vision of a different kind of downtown. The sidewalks that were built where no one walks on Route 108, ridiculous. Invest more in kids and families - schools, parks, camps, etc. That is what this community needs and should focus on.
105. Parks and Rec, Library, and town administrators are excellent! It would be great if the town website was easier to use (the Library site is great). More communication from Parks and Rec and town in general. The town does send out an email occasionally but it is just a typed page vs an easy format to read through (I.e. the Library).
106. Stratham services are available to those who can drive. Town services are handled very well, my concern is that due to the way the town has been laid out there is no central spot for elderly housing close to the few dining and grocery options. I am grateful to be near two hospitals and my physician's office but aging in place is not an option here.
107. Stratham Hill Park is good, I use the library, service at town hall is very friendly, helpful, patient all good.
108. Of those services that I use, I am satisfied.
109. Would like to have an opportunity to start a recreational bike group for older adults or anyone interested in riding for recreation
110. It is ok