

## Potential Next Steps

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

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

- ◆ What is working well but is underutilized?
- ◆ What is working well but is overutilized?
- ◆ 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?
- ◆ What else needs to be created?



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

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

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

## Acknowledgments

The Rockingham Age Friendly Communities Initiative is administered by the Rockingham Planning Commission and Rockingham Nutrition Meals on Wheels Program. It is supported by a two year grant from the Point32 Health Foundation (formerly Tufts Health Plan Foundation) with supplemental funding and technical assistance from AARP New Hampshire.

Stratham’s Age Friendly Community Assessment was guided by a local steering committee with representatives from the Stratham Planning Board, Planning Department, Selectboard, Parks and Recreation, Wiggin Memorial Library, Stratham 76ers, and local residents.

The project is guided at the regional level by a Regional Steering Committee made up of municipal appointees from the six assessment communities. The Steering Committee includes representatives from select boards, town administration, senior services, parks and recreation, public libraries, and planning and development. The committee also benefits from the expertise of a range of agencies focused on one or more of AARP’s Eight Domains of Livable Communities such as transportation, housing, respect and social inclusion, home care, and public health.



## Stratham Age Friendly Community Survey

### Planning for the needs of older residents now and into the future

What characteristics make Stratham a great place to grow up and grow old? What can Stratham do to better address the needs of older residents? During 2022 Stratham was one of six communities that worked with the Rockingham Planning Commission (RPC) to conduct an Age Friendly Community Assessment with funding from the Tufts Health Plan Foundation and AARP NH.

The term “Age Friendly Community” was coined by AARP and is shorthand for communities that enable residents to thrive at every age and every stage of life. Age Friendly Communities are committed to supporting their youngest residents, oldest residents, and everyone in between; however, the focus of this project was on older residents. The assessment used a national model developed by AARP that considers Eight Domains of Livability for Age Friendly Communities, including transportation, housing, design of outdoor spaces and building, opportunities for civic and social participation, respect and social inclusion, communication, health and nutrition services, and work and volunteer opportunities.

Transportation | Health & Nutrition | Outdoor Spaces & Buildings | Social & Civic Engagement



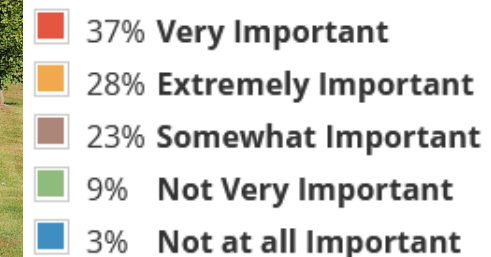
Work & Civic Opportunities | Housing | Respect & Social Inclusion | Communication & Information

## Why Does it Matter?

Stratham, Rockingham County, and our entire state have an aging population. According to the 2020 Census, New Hampshire is the second oldest state, behind only Maine. Between 2015 and 2040 the population aged 65 and over in Rockingham County is projected to nearly double from 48,276 to 93,319. Residents age 65 and over will increase from 19% of the population in 2020 to over 28% by 2040. This will have impacts for workforce, housing, transportation, economic vitality, and community services.

Furthermore, findings from Stratham’s 2022 Age Friendly Communities survey show that residents wish to remain in the community as they age. 28% of respondents said it was “Extremely Important” to remain in Stratham in their 70s, 80s, and beyond while 37% answered that it was “Very Important.”

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



## What Did We Learn?

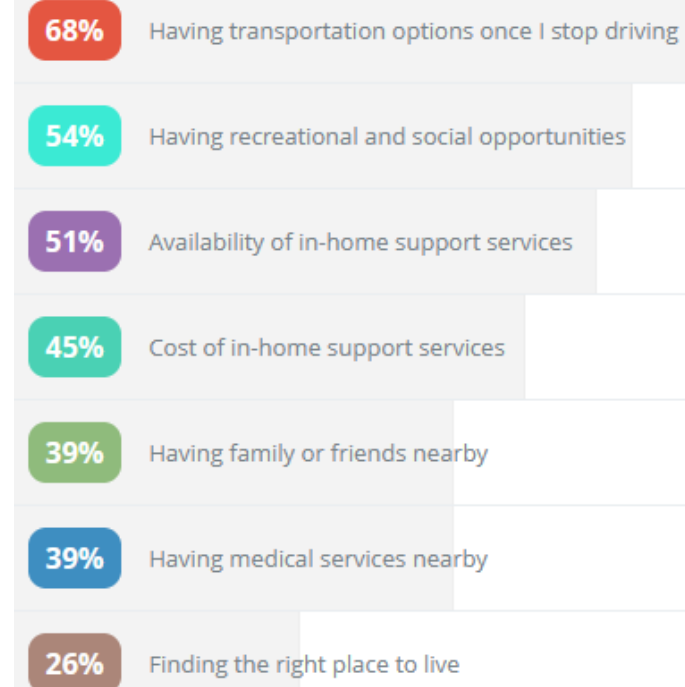
Stratham's Age Friendly Community Survey was adapted from a national model developed by AARP and included questions related to AARP's eight dimensions of Age Friendly Communities: transportation, housing, social engagement, outdoor spaces and buildings, work and civic engagement, respect and social inclusion, health and nutrition services, and information flow. The survey was available online and in paper format. Of the 237 people who responded, 17% were 54 years old or younger, 19% were 55-64 years of age, 40% were 65-74, 19% were 75-84, and 4% were 85 or older. 36% have lived in Stratham for 10 years or less and 64% have lived here for 11 or more years. Survey respondents were fairly evenly distributed across income levels. 42% had a household income of less than \$100,000.

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



68% of respondents rated Stratham as an Excellent, Very Good, or Good place to live for older adults. This was the 3rd highest percentage of any assessment community. Portsmouth had the highest rate at 78% followed by Exeter at 77%.

Survey Question 7. What concerns you most about growing older in Stratham?

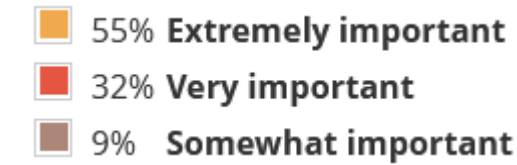


## Key Theme—Transportation

- ◆ **69%** of survey respondents rated public/community transportation in Stratham as Fair or Poor and 10% said the question was not applicable. However, there are community-based transportation services available to residents. COAST provides fixed-route transit to Exeter and Newmarket. Transportation Assistance for Seacoast Citizens (TASC) is 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. The survey responses suggest that more outreach should be done to make residents aware of these options.
- ◆ **99%** of survey respondents used their personal vehicle as their primary mode of travel. This was consistent with other assessment communities. 98% of respondents in Hampton, 97% in Fremont, and 99% in Hampstead reported using their personal vehicle as their primary mode of travel. Exeter had the lowest rate at 81%, followed by Portsmouth at 91%.
- ◆ **68%** of respondents were concerned about having transportation options once they stopped driving. This concern was consistent across all six assessment communities.
- ◆ **74%** of survey respondents rated sidewalks in Stratham as Fair or Poor. **81%** of respondents stated that bicycle safety in Stratham was Fair or Poor. Improvements to sidewalks and bicycle infrastructure would help residents to utilize these transportation options to a greater degree.

## Key Themes—Housing & Senior Services

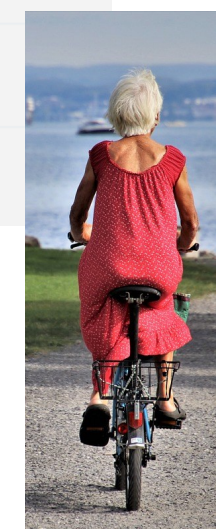
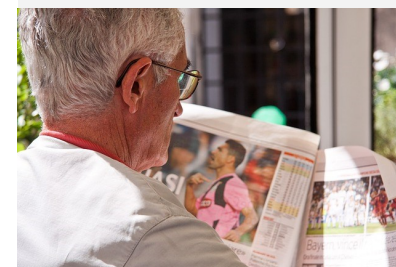
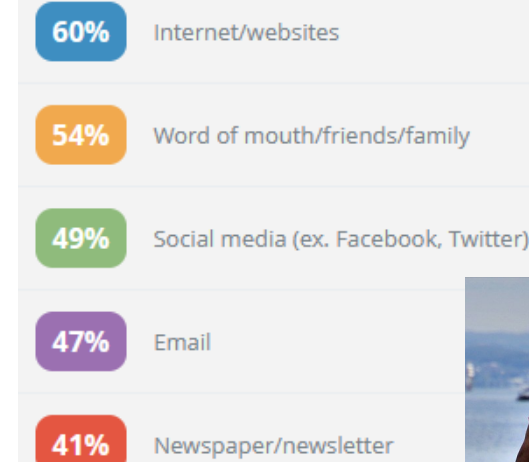
Survey Question 12. How important is it for you to live independently in your own home as an older adult?



- ◆ **30%** said the amount of routine maintenance required on their home did not meet their needs very well or at all
- ◆ **39%** were concerned about having medical services nearby
- ◆ **51%** were concerned about the availability of in-home support services
- ◆ **45%** were concerned about the cost of these services

## Key Theme—Recreation & Social Engagement

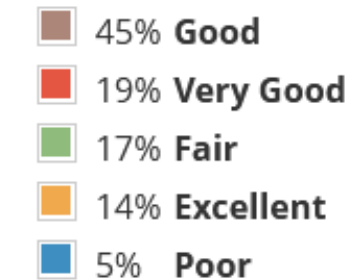
Survey Question 24. How do you get info about services & events in Stratham? (top 5 results)



Survey Question 30. If you would like to have more social interaction, what prevents you from doing so?

- ◆ **43%** were unaware of activities/events that interest them
- ◆ **30%** stated scheduling conflicts
- ◆ **24%** were not interested in socializing more
- ◆ **16%** had no one to connect with
- ◆ **4%** stated mobility or health issues
- ◆ **4%** stated it was too costly
- ◆ **0%** stated lack of transportation was a barrier

Survey Question 28. How would you rate your social life?



### Recommendations:

- ◆ Improve the town's website to include a dedicated page for all social and recreational opportunities available to seniors.
- ◆ Promote the Selectboard newsletter and encourage residents to subscribe.
- ◆ Promote recreational opportunities and events on the Stratham Talks Facebook group.
- ◆ Provide information in hard copy flyers or brochures at the library and town hall.