



Age-Friendly Community Assessment: Town of Londonderry



August 2017

Town of Londonderry

Age-Friendly Community Assessment



Introduction

The community assessment process—part of the larger Becoming Age-Friendly program—began in early 2017. The SNHPC team visited all 14 communities in its region, engaging town staff, board members, citizens, and other stakeholders. Staff led conversations on issues that affect seniors and millennials among the following topic areas:

- Transportation & Connections
- Recreation & Engagement
- Housing
- Business & Economic Development

While attendance was robust in most towns—despite SNHPC’s efforts to engage diverse age groups—it should be noted that results from these conversations may not necessarily reflect overall town demographics. For instance, some towns’ attendees were primarily seniors; therefore, responses may naturally be more senior-oriented. Feedback gleaned from community conversations has been supplemented with sample data from a community survey that was widely distributed, and which saw 641 responses from across the region.

These two sources of information dovetailed to create this document: a 12-page summary of age-friendliness in each municipality, most of which came from townspeople themselves. The hope is for these documents to become a valuable resource to assess current age-friendliness, as well as to constructively evaluate what improvements might lead municipalities toward a more age-friendly future.



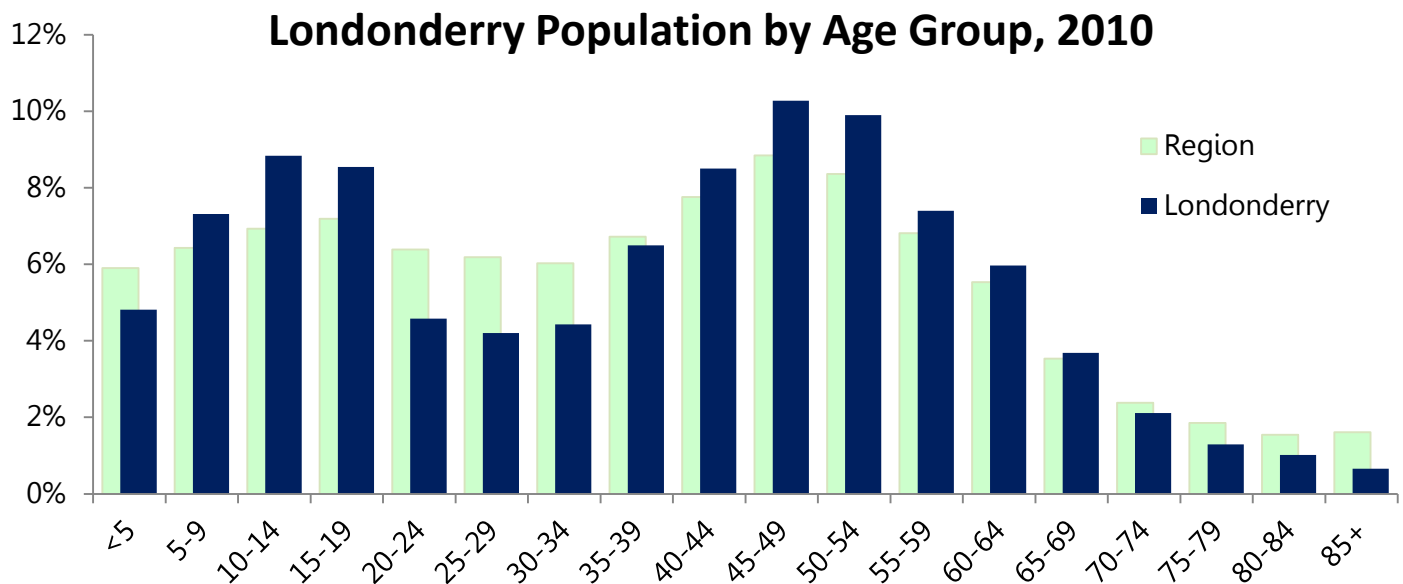
Photo: SNHPC



Community Snapshot

This region was settled by Scottish colonists in 1718 at the encouragement of Massachusetts Governor Samuel Shute, when New Hampshire was still considered part of that colony. It was at that time known as Nutfield because of heavily wooded areas. In 1722, the township was incorporated as Londonderry, after the town in Ireland from where many of the settlers had come. At the time, Londonderry was the second-largest town in New Hampshire, and included all or part of Derry, Manchester, and Windham. Early Londonderry settlers

spread out into surrounding villages, bringing Scottish and Irish names such as Antrim, Derry, and Dunbarton.¹ In 2015, Londonderry's population was 24,563, 10th largest in New Hampshire and 3rd largest in the SNHPC region.



Londonderry's population characteristics differ from those of the region in several ways. It has more youth population between the ages of 5-19, but then there is a precipitous drop-off in the 20-34 age cohorts. Nearly 20% of Londonderry's overall population comes from the 45-49 and 50-54 age group. Percentages ages 55-69 are slightly higher than the regional average, but 70+ populations are quite a bit lower than the regional average.

¹ From NH Employment Security Town Profiles.



What is the community doing well?

- Partnerships, such as the Senior Center oral history project: 22 seniors signed up to work with high school students to record stories from old Londonderry
- Taking advantage of proximity to Manchester Airport and I-93
- Agricultural businesses such as Mack's Orchard are economic drivers, bringing both tourists and locals out in great numbers
- Robust bus service to Boston



Where is there room for improvement?

- Walkability and transportation options, such as later service hours for CART, and improved taxi choices.
- Inability of residents to downsize houses due to high land prices and the nonfeasibility of developers building more affordable dwellings on expensive lots.
- A paucity of higher-income jobs; currently much of the workforce is industrial.

Transportation & Connections

Highlights:

- Proximity to Manchester Airport, I-93, Boston Express and CART are major assets.
- CareGivers' Volunteer Driver Program is also valuable to the town.
- Getting around without a car is tricky – walkability ranges from poor to nonexistent.
- The rail trail and Musquash Recreation Area are valuable assets, but one must drive to get to them, and parking is very limited.

Assets (in no particular order):

- Well-maintained roads (some with fog lines)
- DPW director is extremely efficient with limited funding



"If you can't drive, you can't exist in this town."

– Londonderry resident

Barriers/Opportunities:

- Taxi service is lacking
- Many varying opinions on how well one could get around without a car; on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 10 (highest), consensus was between 3 and 4.
- While there are some sidewalks near schools, almost no pupils can walk to/from school
- NH 102 is a huge barrier; no pedestrian connection across
- Bus service is only good if you're going to Boston
- Some don't know about transportation options
- Lack of parking at trailhead(s) is a challenge for some users.

Basic Data²³:



Mi. of town roads

184



WalkScore

16 of 100



Londonderry Trailways

Rail Trail Length

3.2 miles



Nearest Interstate

Exits 4&5 in town

Access to Internet:

- WiFi is available at town office, Senior Center, library, and most public buildings.
- Skype was seen as an underutilized resource; there is potential to have a large screen for Skyping in the Senior Center



² Sources: NH Employment Security Community Profiles, Town of Goffstown, www.walkscore.com

³ WalkScore is calculated at Goffstown village center

Highlights

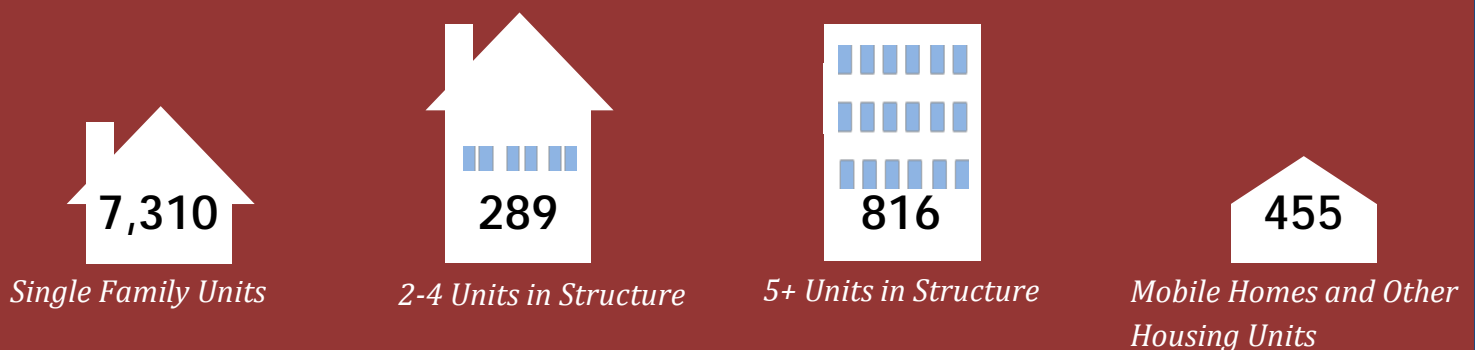
- In last 5 years, most new housing has been single-family, but there is also a trend toward multi-family, age-restricted, and workforce housing
- While the Master Plan recommends more diverse housing and regs allow for a broad variety of uses, development has been largely market-driven
- Real estate taxes were seen by residents as being too high, esp. compared to Mass

Assets(in no particular order):

- A mixture of housing is allowed throughout town
- CareGivers provides some volunteer handyman services to individuals who cannot perform their own work
- Eversource will perform free energy assessments and subsidize insulation

Barriers/Opportunities:

- Affordable (elderly) housing is lacking – according to seniors at meeting
- A lot of senior housing is in the pipeline
- Universal design is almost non-existent in Londonderry, and indeed in most of NH
- Create options for co-habiting
- Create connections between seniors and volunteers



⁴ Source: US Census, American Community Survey 2011-15



Recreation & Engagement

Highlights:

- Orchards (including Mack's) are civic-minded and provide multi-generational outdoor opportunities for residents and visitors alike.
- The rail trail has grown in size & popularity and is a considerable asset.
- Well-attended events take place throughout the year, including the Fire Department Thanksgiving Dinner for seniors and many Old Home Week happenings.

Assets (in no particular order):

- School system/activities
- YMCA – senior yoga
- Town Arts Council
- Historical Society/Morrison House
- Summer concerts on the common
- “Pay it Forward” club at high school
- Senior Center/senior programming
- Leach library/multi-generational programs
 - Library features an ‘artist of the month’ (pictured)
- Community CareGivers – volunteer activities for seniors
- Churches: Orchard Christian Fellowship, St Mark's, St Jude's (food pantry, blood drive, outreach program to homebound)
- Old Home Week events held on town common – parade, races, etc.
- Workout clubs, breweries, & restaurants are gathering places for millennials
- Londonderry Times (free weekly newspaper) is a great asset
- Town website – info accessible via Town & Senior Center websites & Facebook



Barriers/Opportunities:

- Identifying/welcoming new residents: i.e. Town Clerk “Welcome Wagon”
- Local television station for cable subscribers only



Business & Economic Development

Highlights:

- Manchester Airport and related businesses are a huge boon to employment
- Higher-paying jobs would attract more millennials; currently, they are lured to significantly higher pay scales 45 minutes to the south in Boston

Assets (in no particular order):

- Mack's Orchard
- Other orchards/farmstands
- Stonyfield Yogurt
- Original Dunkin Donuts serves as social center
- Pettengill Road development
- Airport services



Londonderry schools & town complex

Barriers/Opportunities:

- Higher utility & land costs
- Few kid-friendly playplaces or playgrounds
- Many town businesses are industrial
- Many jobs in Londonderry are low-paying service-based; most residents commute out of town.
- While there is a TIF district near the airport, residents do not necessarily see tax relief



Partnerships

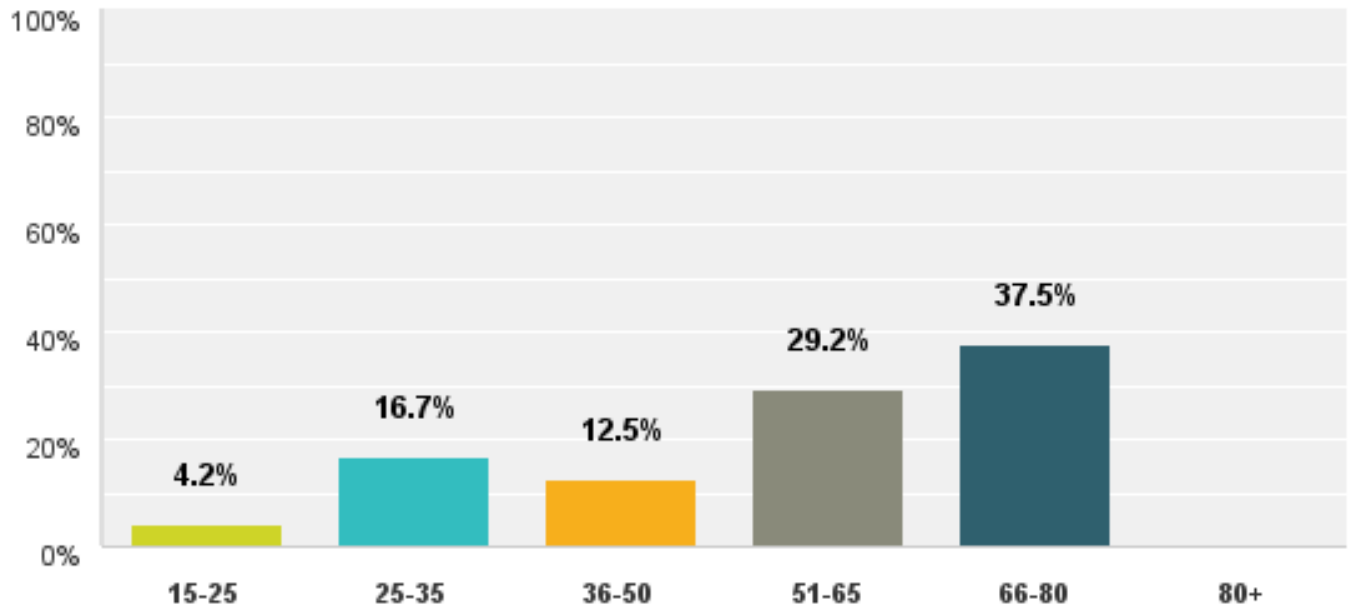
- Fire Department/Senior Center put on a Senior Thanksgiving Dinner
- Conservation Commission/Scouts
- Many, many others!



Survey Says...

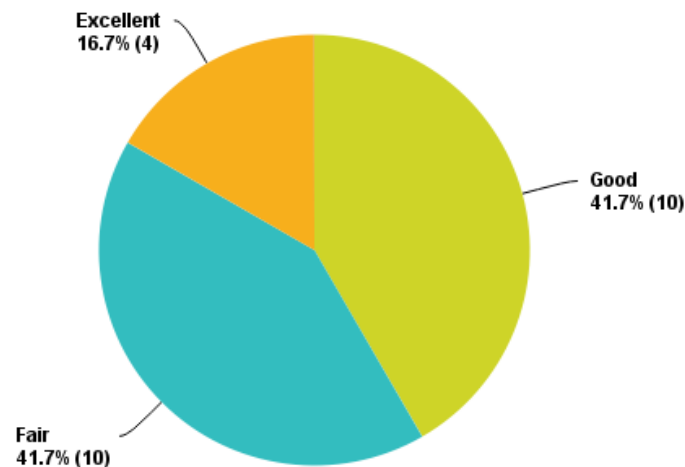
[From February through April of 2017, The Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission (SNHPC) embarked on a “Becoming Age-Friendly” program. A resident survey was hosted by SNHPC and sponsored by AARP, Tufts Health Plan Foundation, and the City of Manchester to gather ordinary citizens’ input on topics including recreation, transportation, housing, and beyond. A total of 641 responses were received, including 24 from Londonderry.]

What is your age?



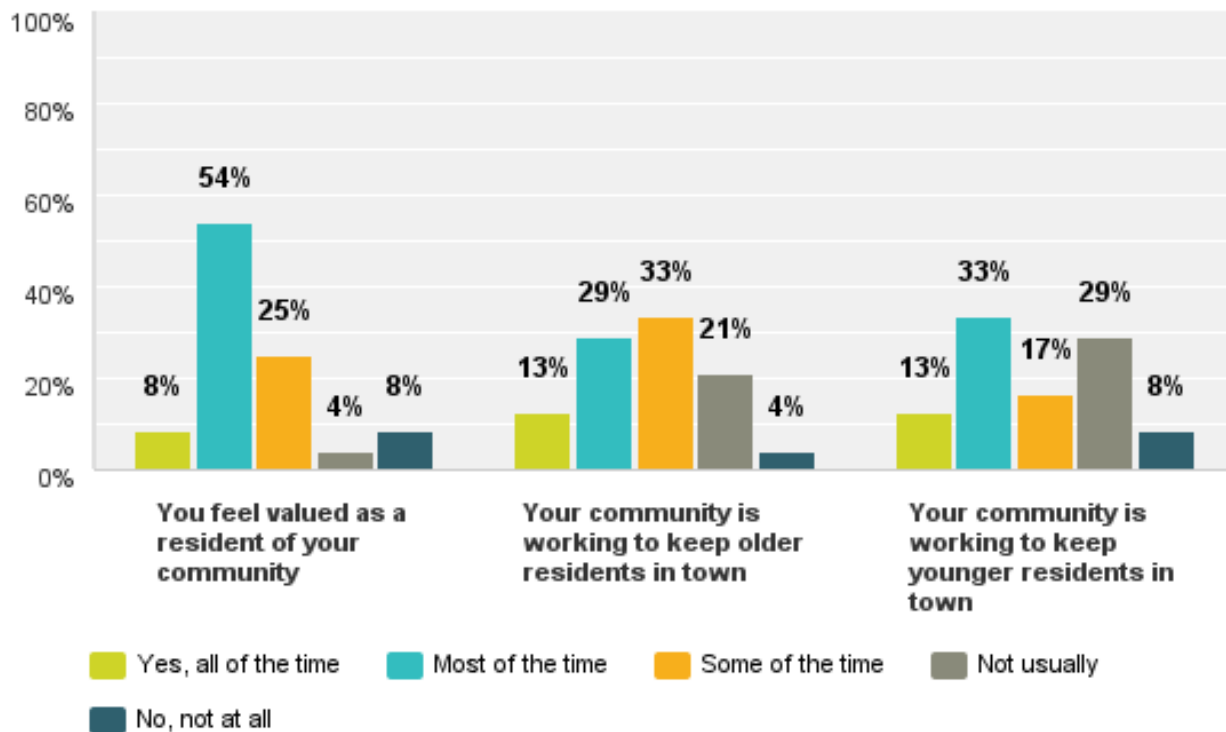
The vast majority of respondents (66.7%) came from the 51-65 and 66-80 age brackets. There were no survey participants over the age of 80.

How would you rate your community as a place for people to live as they age?



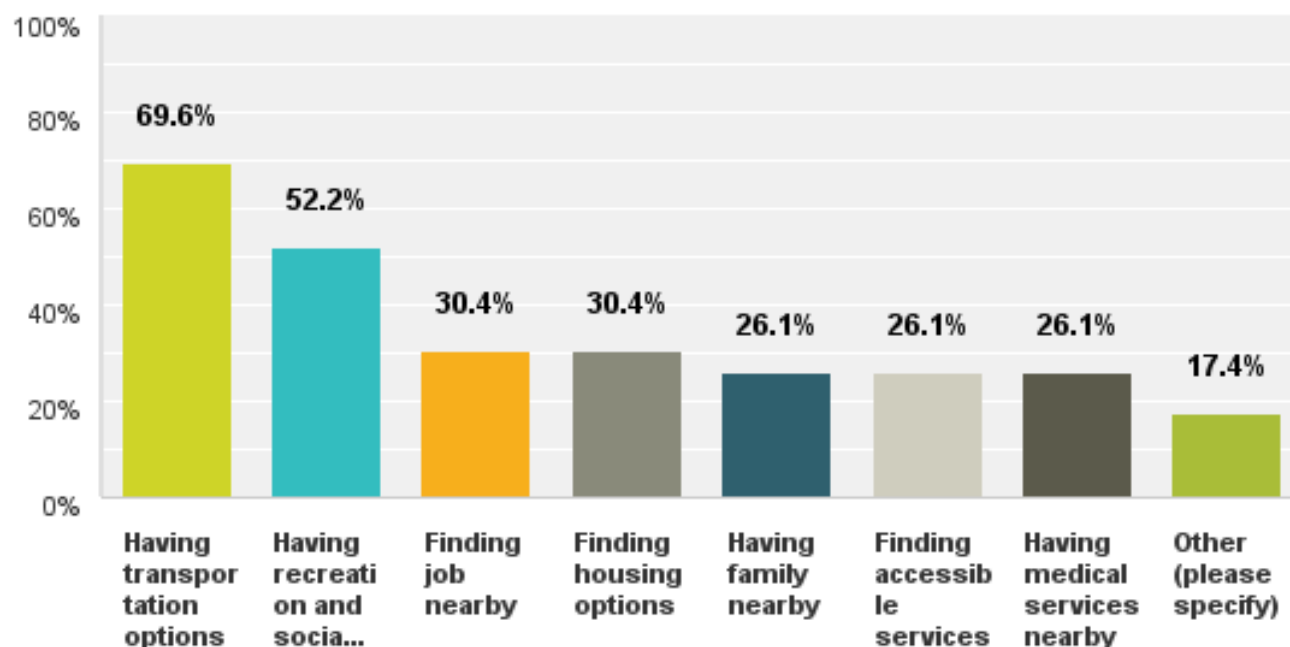
A majority (58%) agreed that Londonderry was either a “good” or “excellent” place for people to live as they age. No respondents deemed it a poor place to age.

Check all that apply for the following statements



While 60% of residents surveyed feel valued as a resident of Londonderry most or all of the time, only 46% felt that the community was working to keep younger residents in town most or all of the time. 37% responded “not usually” or “not at all” to this question.

What concerns you most about aging in your community? (check all that apply)



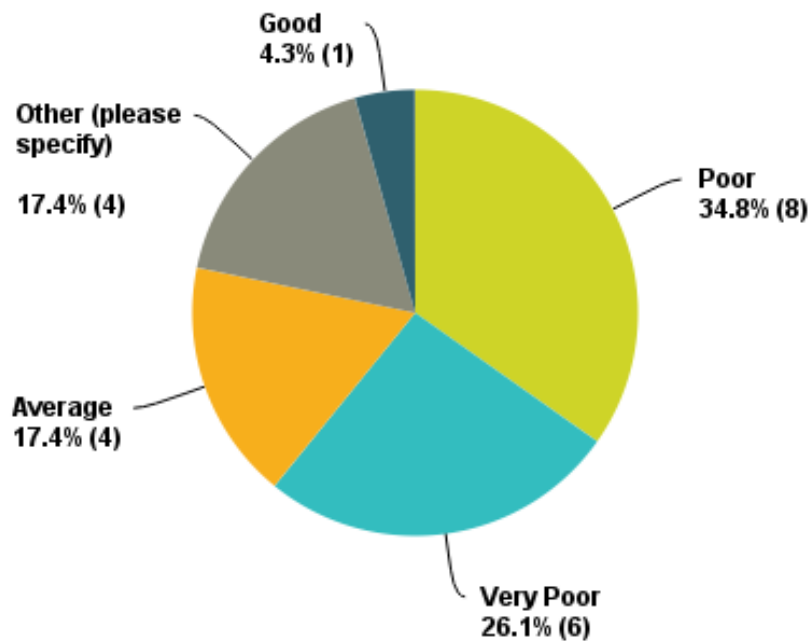
Transportation was by far the biggest concern, a trend we saw in many SNHPC communities. However, in many other towns housing was the second-biggest concern, whereas in Londonderry recreation and social options came in second at 52.2%. It bears repeating, however, that a sample size of 23 is very small, and less than 10 respondents to this question were under the age of 50.

What is the single most important change that would enable you to stay in your home/community?



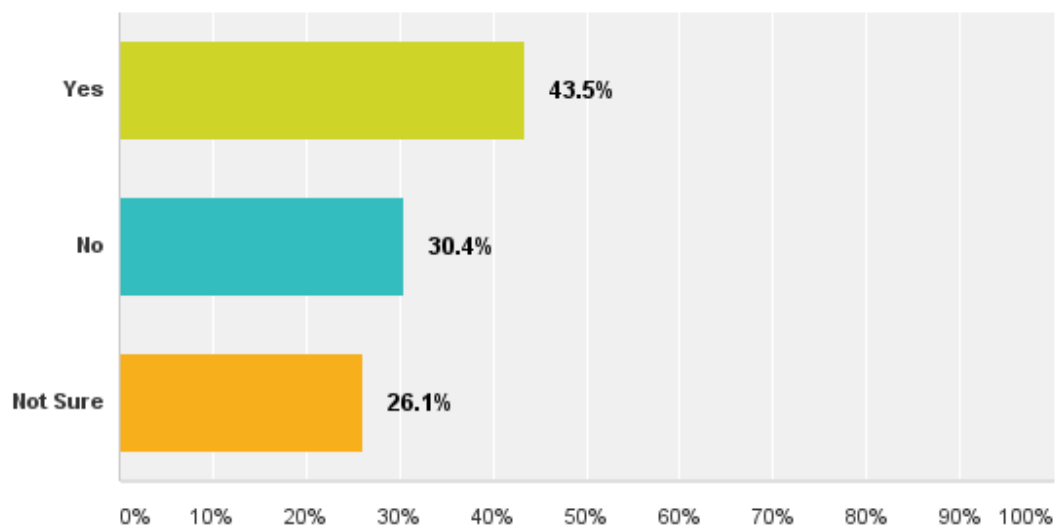
Taxes and affordability were mentioned most, followed by "schools" and "community."

How would you rate your community's transportation options if you were unable to drive?



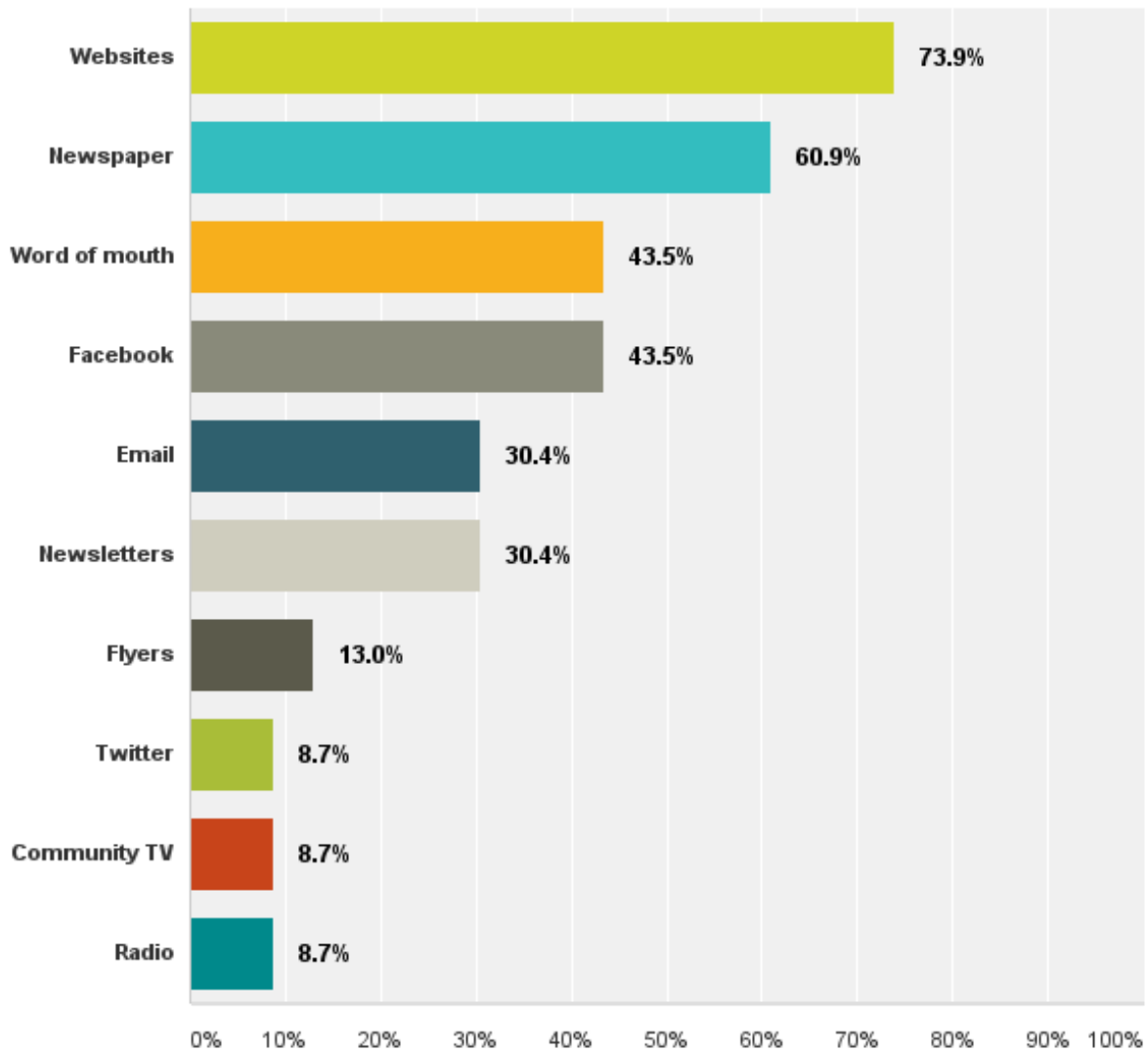
In terms of transportation options, only one person responded "good"; 60.9% responded "poor" or "very poor", mirroring trends seen in nearly all SNHPC communities.

Whether you wanted to move into your first home/unit or move into a smaller home/unit, does your community offer appealing alternatives?



Less than half (43.5%) of respondents thought the community offers appealing alternatives if one wanted to move into his/her first unit or a smaller home.

How do you find information about community services & events?



Websites proved to be the #1 method of finding information about community services/events. However, newspapers ranked higher (60.9%) than Facebook (43.5%) or word of mouth (43.5%).

Flyers, Twitter, Community TV, and Radio were each deemed useful by less than 15% of respondents.



Acknowledgements

The Becoming Age-Friendly program was administered by the *Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission (SNHPC)*, and funded by a grant from the *Tufts Health Plan Foundation*. The program received funding and resource support from *AARP NH* and *City of Manchester Health Department*.

Becoming Age-Friendly received regional support from many stakeholders across the Greater Manchester region, including members from the following organizations:

Access Portsmouth	Manchester Young Professionals Network
Alliance for Healthy Aging	NH Builders Association
Bike Manchester	NH Department of Health & Human Services
Community Caregivers	NH Endowment of Health
Easterseals	NH Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI)
EngAGING NH	NH Institute of Art
Granite YMCA	NH Institute of Politics
Grantmakers in Aging	NH State Committee on Aging
Greater Derry Londonderry Chamber of Commerce	Plan NH
Infinity Realty Group	Regional Trails Coordinating Council
InTown Manchester	Saint Anselm College
JSA, Inc.	Service Link
Manchester-Boston Regional Airport	Southern New Hampshire University
Manchester Chamber of Commerce	Stay. Work. Play.
Manchester Community College	Transport NH
Manchester Public TV	Union Leader
Manchester Regional Area Committee on Aging	UNH Institute on Disability
Manchester Transit Authority	UNH Manchester

The Town of Londonderry featured dozens of participants between the community assessment and the resident survey. The program's Community Representatives from Londonderry included:

Colleen Mailloux	Deb Lievens
Kevin Smith	Cathy Blash

This town report was prepared by the Becoming Age-Friendly team and staff from SNHPC:

Sylvia von Aulock, Project Manager	Cameron Prolman
Adam Hlasny	Derek Shooster
Nate Miller	Amy Kizak
David Preece	Linda Moore-O'Brien

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