



Age-Friendly Community Assessment: Town of New Boston



Photo: SNHPC

August 2017

Town of New Boston

Age-Friendly Community Assessment

Prepared by the Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission



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

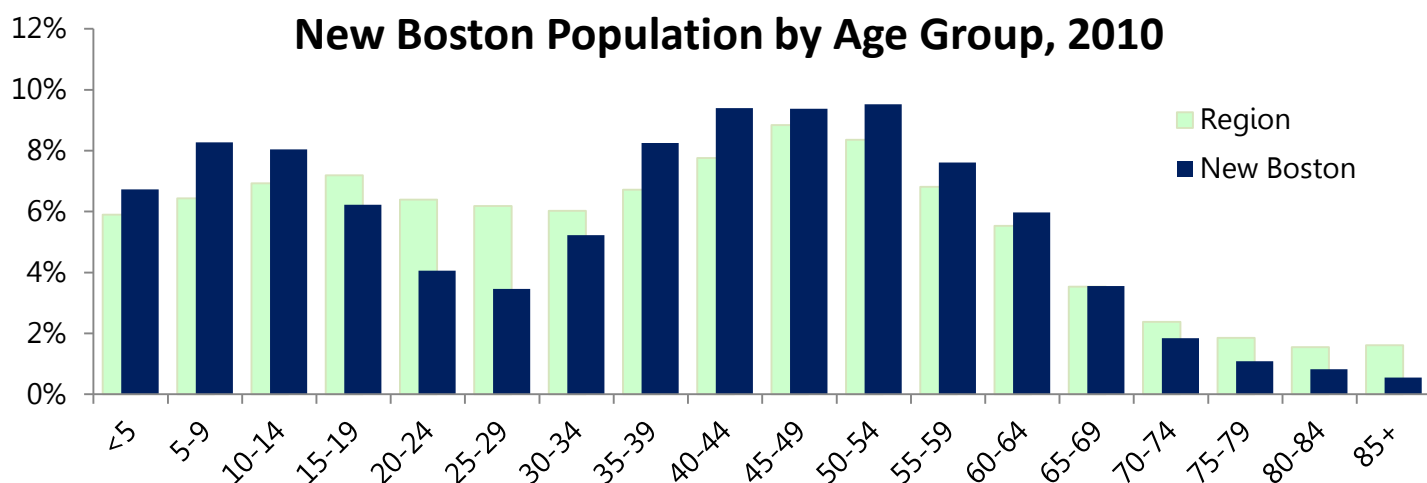


Community Snapshot



New Boston, NH is located in Hillsborough County, abutting the towns of Franconia, Weare, Goffstown, Bedford, Amherst, Mont Vernon, Lyndeborough.

While first granted in 1736, what would eventually become the Town of New Boston would change boundaries, names, and populations until its incorporation in 1763 by Governor Benning Wentworth. The community is home to lush forests, farmland, scenic rivers, access to bicycle and pedestrian trails, and a cozy town center where residents can live and enjoy the quintessential New Hampshire experience.



New Boston has a population of 5,321. According to the 2010 US Census, the majority of New Boston's population sits between the ages of 35 to 59 while having a relatively low percentage of 20 to 34 year olds, mirroring trends seen in other SNHPC communities. Another observable trend is the departure of seniors over 70 years of age.

Community Assessment: April 3, 2017

[15+ in attendance, including reps from Parks & Rec, Public Works, Health Dept, Police, School, Library, Religious Institutions, and Town Residents]



What is the community doing well?

- New Boston is a community of **engaged residents**
- Residents favor the community's **rural character**
- The **bike and pedestrian trails** are a huge asset, and considerable draw
- The town is home to the **Hillsboro County 4H Fairgrounds** which hosts a number of events where community members and members of surrounding communities come to visit and celebrate



Where is there room for improvement?

- **Lack of walkability** outside of town center
- **Minimum lot zoning limits housing diversity**
- There **aren't many choices** for a first-time homebuyer or for seniors wanting to downsize



Transportation & Connections

Highlights:

- Town walkability rated 1 out of 10 by participants
- On local roads, residents feel they can walk around and not worry about fast-moving traffic; on major routes, residents feel it is too dangerous to walk at all
- New Boston is a “drive-thru” and “commuter town” as described by town residents
- Access to major state routes is convenient, but also seen as a barrier to walkability

Assets:

- Trail Network – some include benches
- Access to major state routes: NH 13, NH 77, NH 136
- Mostly local roads, safe for walking
- Residents value their 50 miles of unpaved roads
- Caring Hands – private after-school transportation
- Gen. John Stark Scenic Byway is seen as a beautiful asset, but is largely only accessible by car; it is not walkable or bikeable



Photo: New Boston Conservation Commission

Barriers/Opportunities:

- Disconnected road system
- Lack of sidewalks
- Lack of walkability, especially away from the town center
- State routes become barriers to walkability
- ‘Drive-thru’ community on major commuting routes

Basic Data:



Mi. of town roads
102



WalkScore
25 of 100



Transit
None



Nearest Interstate
14 miles

Access to Internet:

- WiFi available at town office, library, and limited access at school
- Connection speed rated as good; some southern areas of the town have limited broadband access



Highlights

- In last five years, mostly single-family dwellings have been built
- Since 2009, New Boston has allowed Accessory Dwelling Units for the purposes of providing expanded affordable housing opportunities, including rental potential, and providing flexibility in household arrangements

Assets:

- New Boston allows for one and two-family dwellings
- Zoning allows for mixed use
- Property tax relief for disabled and veteran residents as well as seniors with lower incomes

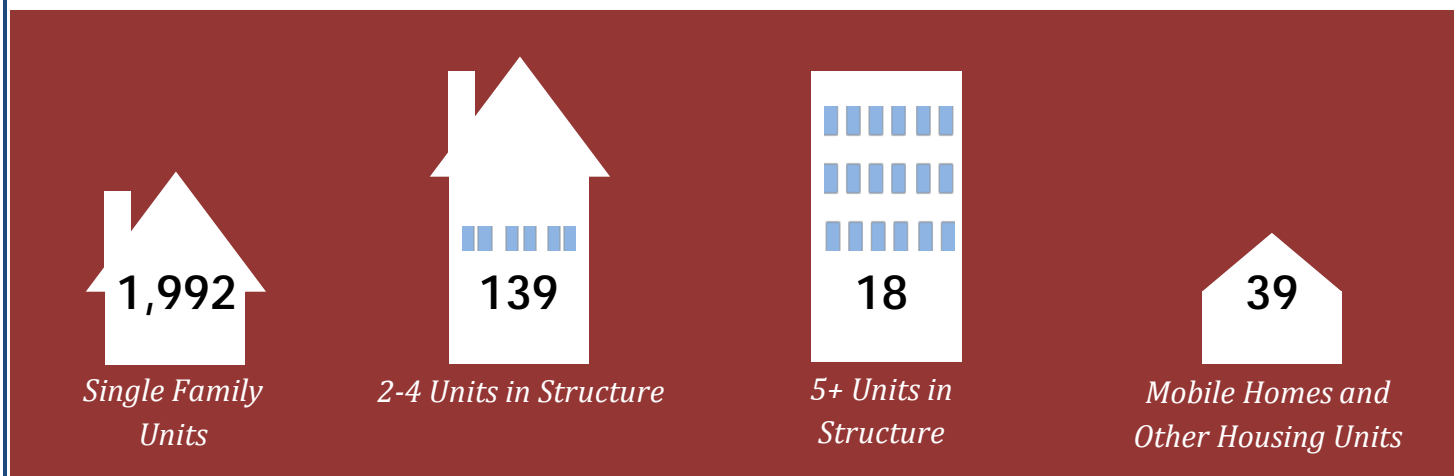


“There is a lack of rental units in town – it’s very hard to find an affordable unit in town”

– New Boston resident

Barriers/Opportunities:

- Lack of sewer and water infrastructure can be a barrier to developing more diverse housing options
- Two-acre minimum zoning can be limiting for housing options
- No housing services offered to residents (i.e. weatherization assistance)
- Disabled/universal design considerations haven’t been adopted
- Lack of developable land
- Lack of affordable houses for first-time homebuyer & for seniors wanting to downsize or find single-level living options





Recreation

Highlights:

- Multigenerational opportunities provided by Town Parks and Recreation Department
- Parks, conservation areas, and trail network offer residents and visitors a means of exercise, leisure, and mobility
- Events at the Hillsborough County 4H Fairgrounds such as the Hillsborough County Fair, Blues Festival, Barn Dance, and more
- Whipple Free Library offers programs and community space for all ages

Assets (in no particular order):

- Town Departments: Multiple programs, especially Parks & Recreation, Fire, and Police
- Whipple Free Library: numerous programs for all ages as well as sizeable space for indoor programs
- Trail Network
- New Boston Central School
- Parks & athletic fields: Ball Field at Old Coach Rd, Ball Field at Town Hall, Gazebo, White Buildings
- Parks and Recreation programs for:
 - **Adults:** Adult Dance Lessons, Adult Softball, Cabin Fever, Comedy, Cake Decoration, Cardiox N' Tone, Casino Coach Trip, Community Workshops, First Aid / CPR, Flu Vaccination Clinic, Fly Fishing, Italian Conversation, Mens Basketball, Molly Stark Shoot-out, Quilting Class, Scrapbooking, Women's Basketball, Yoga, Zengevity, and Zumba
 - **Youth:** After School Program Archery, Babysitter Training, Baseball / Softball / T-Ball, Basketball, Cheerleading, Flag Football, Fly Fishing, Golf, Gymnastics, Karate, Kids Basketball Clinic, Kids Dance Class, Kids Dances, Lego Club, Mulit Sports Camp, Play Group, Play-Well LEGO Camp, Soccer, Summer Basketball Clinic, Summer Camp Coolio, Teen Adventure Group, Teen Dodge Ball, Tennis, Volleyball, Youth Bicycle Camp
 - **Seniors:** Blood Pressure Clinics, Flu Vaccination Clinics, Foot Care Clinic, Lunch, Monthly Movie, Monthly Trips, Senior Reading Program, Yoga, Zengevity
- Churches: New Boston Community, New Boston Baptist, Chesni Hill Chapel
- Historical Society
- Project champions: Town Departments, Library, Community Residents
- Piscataquog Land Conservancy
- Various communication mediums: Whipple Free Library Newsletter, New Boston Central School Newsletter, Recreation's Center of Gravity Gazette



Barriers/Opportunities:

- Filling holes in trail network
- There is an opportunity to utilize Parks & Rec van for senior transportation services
- No single community center
- There is an opportunity to establish a volunteer program to facilitate community events



Business & Economic Development

Highlights:

- The lack of gas lines, sewer and water stunts development possibilities;
- Lack of commercial businesses influence residents to find work/shopping opportunities in other communities
- Small businesses like Dodge's Store offer convenience while keeping a rural character
- Town allows mixed-use development

Assets:

- Dodge's Store
- Farmer's Market
- Friendly Beaver Campground
- New Boston Hardware
- Mr. Gee's Tire Corporation
- Rose Meadow (Assisted Living Facility)
- New Boston Air Force Station
- Molly's Tavern



Barriers/Opportunities:

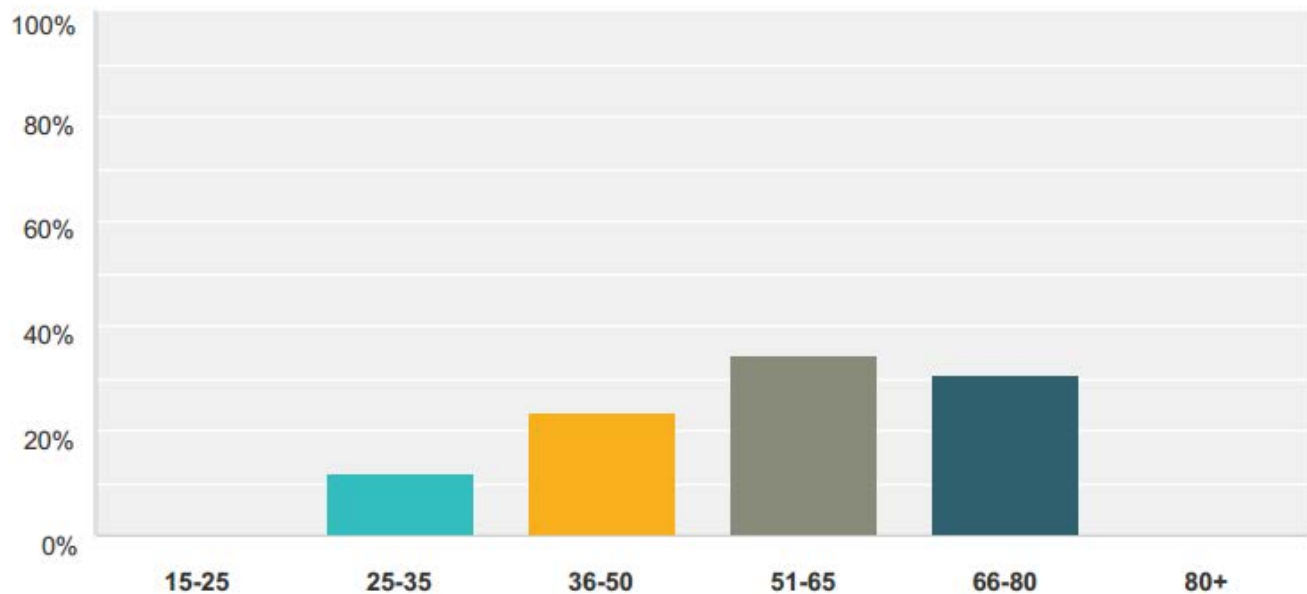
- Lack of sewer/water infrastructure
- Lack of developable space
- Lack of cell phone service
- Lack of broadband



Survey Says...

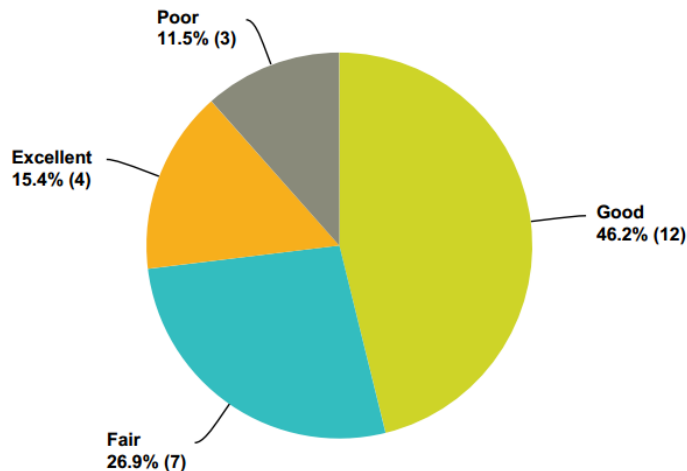
From February through April of 2017, The Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission (SNHPC) embarked on a “Becoming Age-Friendly” program. A resident survey was hosted by SNHPC and sponsored by AARP, Tufts Health Plan Foundation, and the City of Manchester to gather ordinary citizens’ input on topics including recreation, transportation, housing, and beyond. A total of 641 responses were received, including 26 from New Boston. The following is but a sample; full results are available upon request.

What is your age?



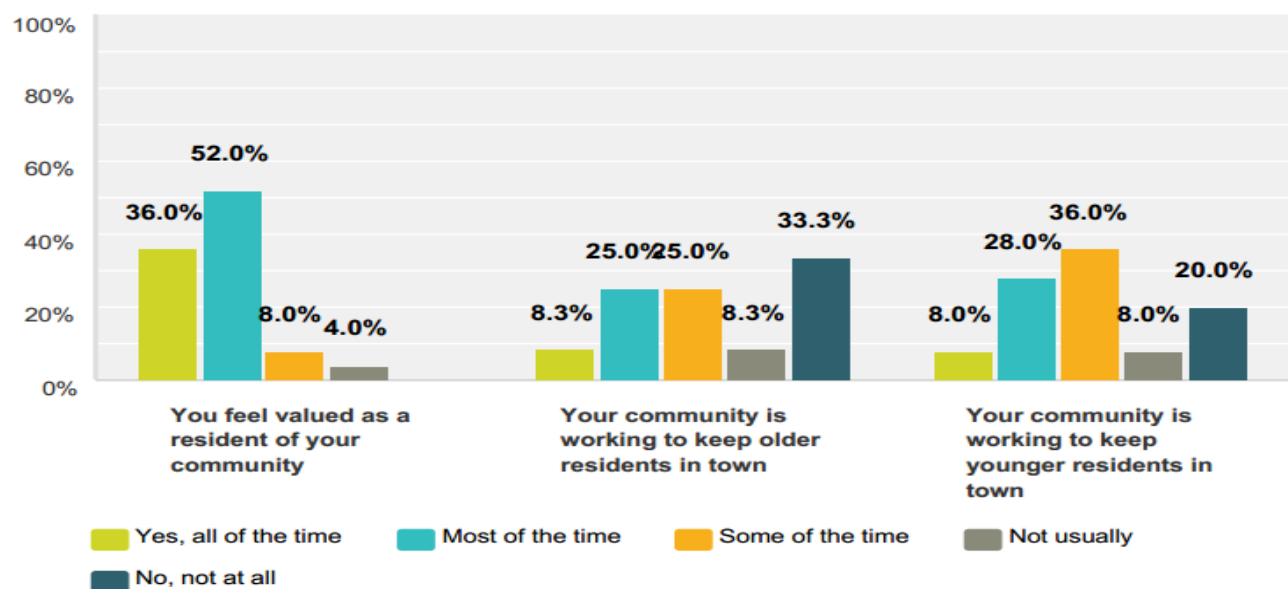
There was a fairly diverse range of respondent ages, but the majority came from the 51-65 age bracket, roughly mirroring the town’s demographics.

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



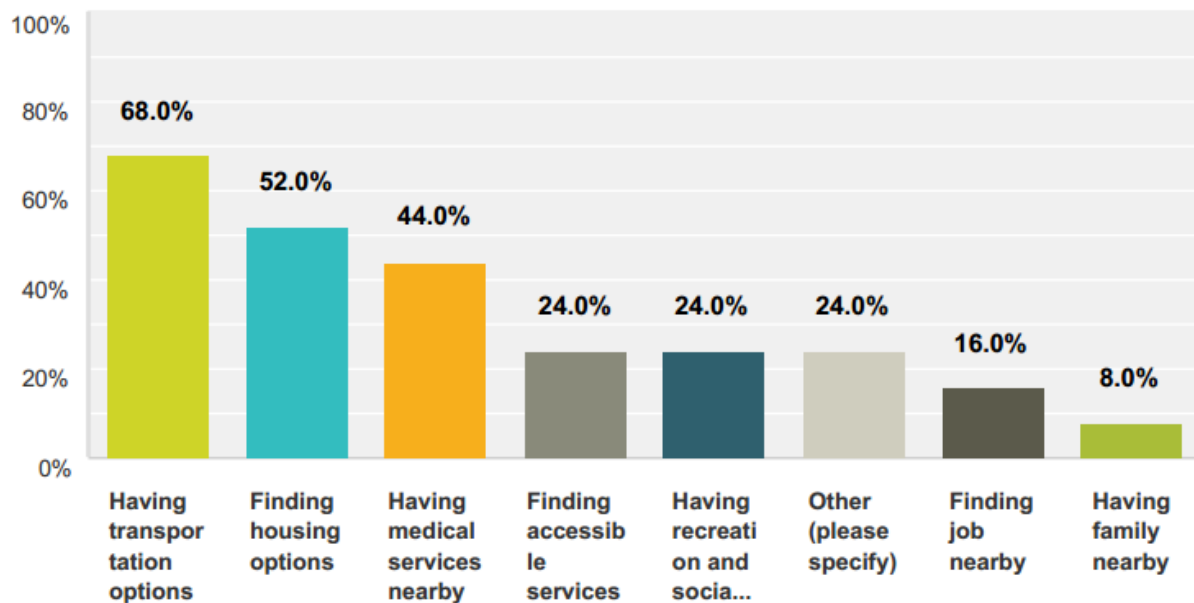
The majority of New Boston respondents (61%) agreed that New Boston was either a “good” or “excellent” place for people to live as they age.

Community Value



The majority of respondents (88%) feel valued as a resident of New Boston most or all of the time, only 36% felt that the community was working to keep younger residents in town most or all of the time. 73.6% responded “not usually” or “not at all” to this question.

What concerns you the most about aging in your community?



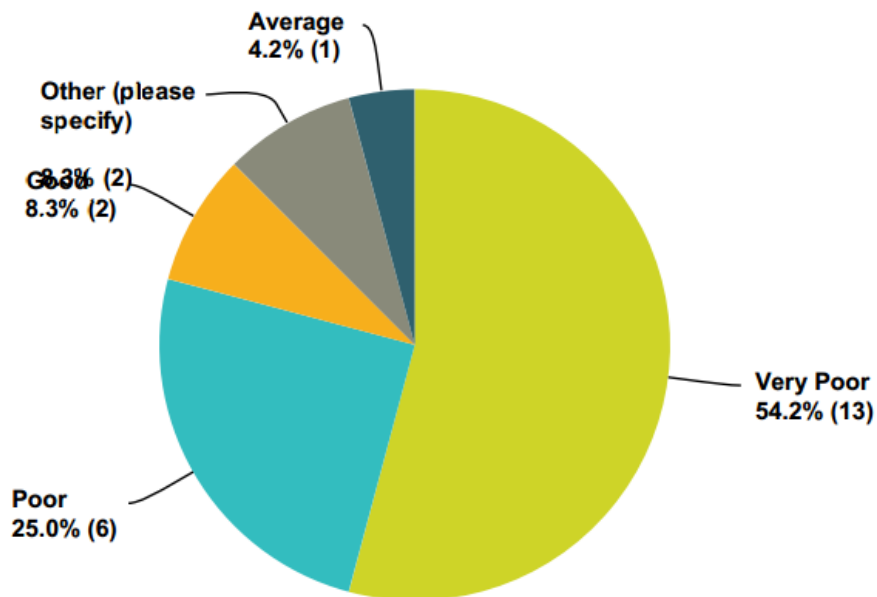
Residents of New Boston are most concerned with having transportation options in their community as they age. Additionally, respondents were concerned about finding housing options that will suit them to meet their needs as they age. The third most selected concern was having medical services nearby. In New Boston, residents have to travel relatively long distances to reach medical services. As people age and eventually lose the ability to drive, having local medical services could be a major asset to the town.

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

Taxes Transportation Housing Access

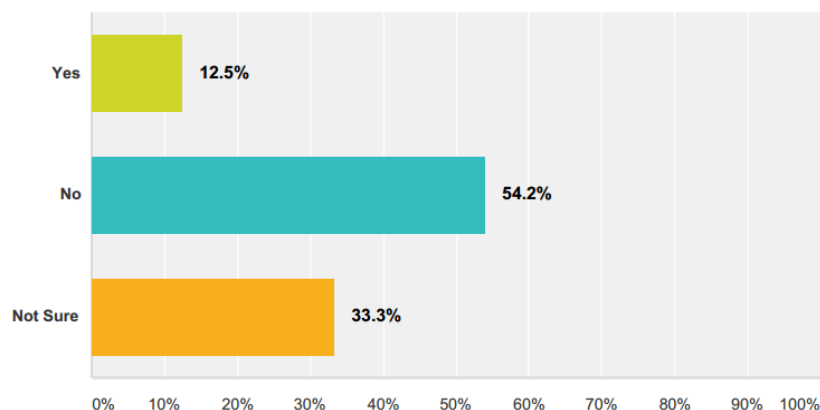
Housing and taxes were mentioned most, followed by access and transportation.

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



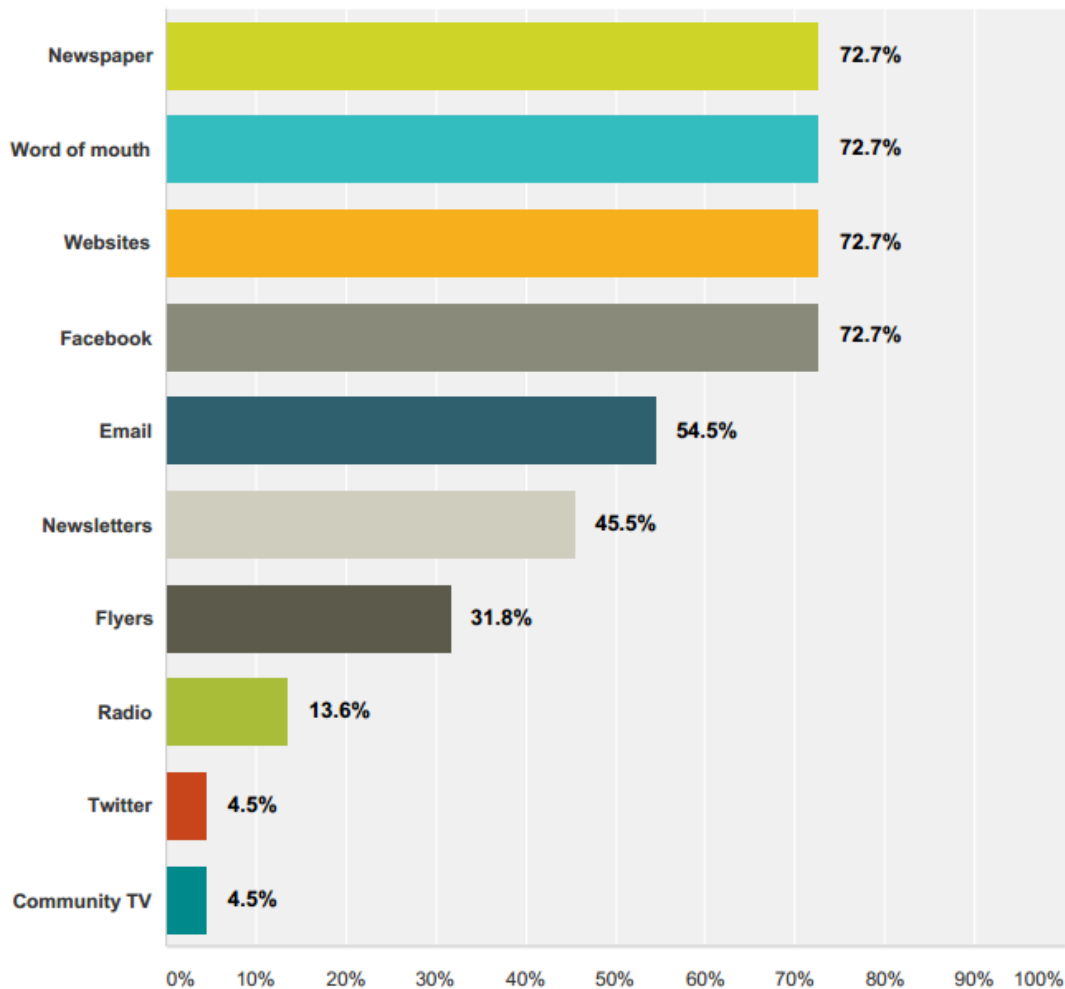
In terms of transportation options, only 8.3% responded "good"; 79.2% responded "poor" or "very poor", mirroring trends seen in nearly all SNHPC communities. In New Boston, there are a limited number of sidewalks which are mostly concentrated in the center of town. Residents who cannot drive would either have to rely on family and friends, medical services that provide transportation, or utilize ride-share services such as Uber or Lyft.

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



Only 12.5% 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 and events?



Newspapers, Word of Mouth, Websites, and Facebook equally proved to be the top methods for finding information about community services and/or events.

Almost half of respondents (45.5%) use newsletters to find information about community events. New Boston has a newsletter titled the "New Boston Bulletin" where residents can receive a newsletter through their email.



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

Mike Sindoni

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

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