

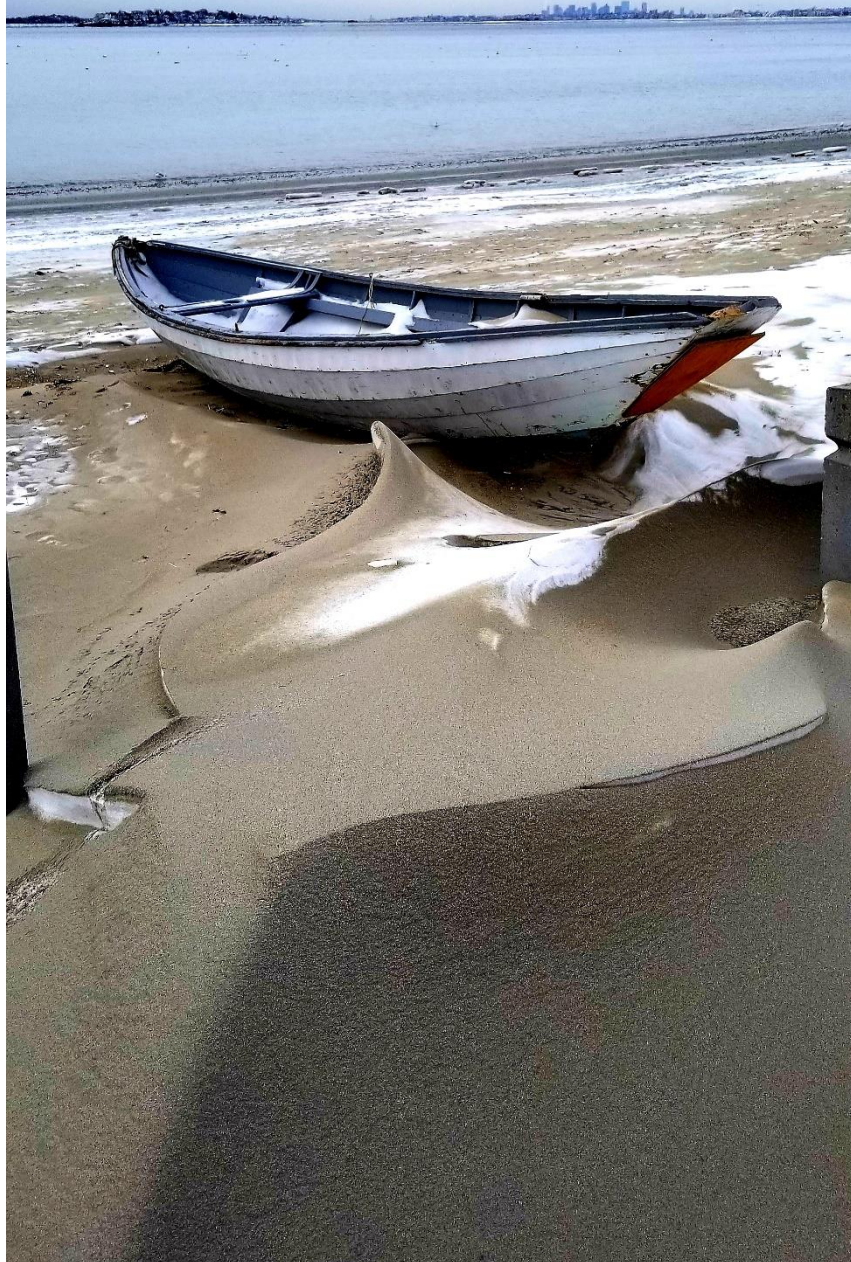
# Swampscott for All Ages Committee

Year One – 2021 – Action Plan

Prepared for the Swampscott Select Board

2021-22-22

Final Version



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## Executive Summary

This report details the actions the Swampscott for All Ages (SfAA) committee plans to complete in 2021. The year one action steps were culled from a report completed by The Center for Social and Demographic Research on Aging, Gerontology Institute, University of Massachusetts Boston in October 2019.<sup>1</sup>

The action steps fall under the eight domains of what constitutes an age-friendly community. Those domains include Outdoor Spaces and Buildings, Transportation, Housing, Social Participation, Respect and Social Inclusion, Civic Participation and Employment, Communication and Information, and Community and Health Services.

The action steps represented here reflect what the respective domain subcommittee members believe can be achieved in year one (2021) with limited need for financial resources and partners.

Of note, the committee embarked on many of the goals listed in the 2019 community needs assessment but because of COVID the SfAA was unable to draft and complete its year one (2021) action plan until now. This report also identifies goals and essential activities for years two (2022) through five (2026).

The following represents some of the more significant year one (2021) SfAA committee goals:

1. Create a Director of Aging Services position
2. Launch in "Stay Connected," a webinar series featuring subject matter experts discussing topics that would improve the quality of life in Swampscott for all residents.
3. Create a Volunteer Telephone Outreach Program to offer social contact, shopping and food assistance to all Swampscott residents over age 60 during the initial scare and through the height of COVID.
4. Establish a Facebook page.
5. Establish a "Swampscott Village."<sup>2</sup>
6. Establish Swampscott as a dementia-friendly community.<sup>3</sup>
7. Explore options for affordable housing.
8. The opening of The Machon, an affordable housing community for elderly.
9. Investigate locations and funding for a new state-of-the-art community life/senior center.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.swampscottma.gov/sites/swampscottma/files/uploads/swampscott\\_for\\_all\\_ages\\_-\\_a\\_community\\_needs\\_assessment\\_october\\_2019\\_final.pdf](http://www.swampscottma.gov/sites/swampscottma/files/uploads/swampscott_for_all_ages_-_a_community_needs_assessment_october_2019_final.pdf) and [http://www.swampscottma.gov/sites/swampscottma/files/uploads/swampscott\\_for\\_all\\_ages\\_-\\_a\\_community\\_needs\\_assessment\\_october\\_2019\\_powerpoint\\_presentation.pdf](http://www.swampscottma.gov/sites/swampscottma/files/uploads/swampscott_for_all_ages_-_a_community_needs_assessment_october_2019_powerpoint_presentation.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.vtvnetwork.org/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.dfamerica.org/>

## Community Profile

### Introduction to Swampscott

The Town of Swampscott is located in Essex County along the Atlantic Coast. It is bordered by the Atlantic Ocean on the East, on the South by the City of Lynn, and on the North by the City of Salem and the Town of Marblehead. The Town is approximately 12 miles from the City of Boston. Established as a town in 1852, Swampscott has a general population of 15,111 according to the 2020 Census and occupies a land area of 3.58 square miles<sup>4</sup>.

According to the 2020 Census, 18.8% of the town's residents were 65 and older. By the year 2030, 35% of Swampscott residents will be age 60 and older, according to the Donahue Institute (<http://www.donahue.umassp.edu/>.)

### Government

Local legislative decisions are made by a representative meeting with administrative authority in a five-member Select Board. Local taxes are assessed by a board of three assessors elected for staggered three-year terms. School affairs are administered by a school committee of five persons elected for staggered three-year terms. In addition, the Select Board appoints members to various boards, committees and commissions.

### Services

The Town provides general governmental services for the territory within its boundaries, including police and fire protection, a water and sewer system, public education K-12, parks and recreation and public library. Principal services provided by the County are a jail and house of correction and a hospital and registries of deeds. Private utilities provide gas and electricity.

The North Shore Regional Vocational School District provides vocational technical education in grades nine through twelve for the Town and fifteen neighboring communities.

The Swampscott Housing Authority provides housing for eligible families, seniors and handicapped persons. Approximately, 3.1% of residents live in poverty, according to the 2020 Census report.

The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority provides rail and bus services to the Town. Commuter rail service is provided by the MBTA with AMTRAK as operating agent.

### Demographic and diversity data

The following data has been culled from the 2020 Census report.

<b>Population</b>	
Population, Census, April 1, 2020	15,111
Population, Census, April 1, 2010	13,787
<b>Age and Sex</b>	
Persons under 5 years, percent	6.10%
Persons under 18 years, percent	22.20%

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/swampscottcdpmassachusetts,US/PST045219>

Persons 65 years and over, percent	18.80%
Female persons, percent	54.10%
<b>Race and Hispanic Origin</b>	
White alone, percent	93.50%
Black or African American alone, percent(a)	1.50%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone, percent(a)	0.00%
Asian alone, percent(a)	2.20%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone, percent(a)	0.00%
Two or More Races, percent	2.10%
Hispanic or Latino, percent(b)	2.50%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino, percent	91.70%
<b>Population Characteristics</b>	
Veterans, 2015-2019	658
Foreign born persons, percent, 2015-2019	12.90%

<b>Housing</b>	
Housing units, July 1, 2019, (V2019)	5,853
Owner-occupied housing unit rate, 2015-2019	77.10%
Median value of owner-occupied housing units, 2015-2019	\$475,500
Median selected monthly owner costs -with a mortgage, 2015-2019	\$2,855
Median selected monthly owner costs -without a mortgage, 2015-2019	\$1,080
Median gross rent, 2015-2019	\$1,916
Building permits, 2020	x

<b>Families &amp; Living Arrangements</b>	
Households, 2015-2019	5,780
Persons per household, 2015-2019	2.57
Living in same house 1 year ago, percent of persons age 1 year+, 2015-2019	88.60%
Language other than English spoken at home, percent of persons age 5 years+, 2015-2019	16.90%

<b>Computer and Internet Use</b>	
Households with a computer, percent, 2015-2019	90.70%
Households with a broadband Internet subscription, percent, 2015-2019	88.70%

<b>Education</b>	
High school graduate or higher, percent of persons age 25 years+, 2015-2019	97.40%
Bachelor's degree or higher, percent of persons age 25 years+, 2015-2019	57.30%

<b>Health</b>	
With a disability, under age 65 years, percent, 2015-2019	4.90%
Persons without health insurance, under age 65 years, percent	0.40%

<b>Economy</b>	
In civilian labor force, total, percent of population age 16 years+, 2015-2019	69.10%
In civilian labor force, female, percent of population age 16 years+, 2015-2019	65.70%
Total accommodation and food services sales, 2012 (\$1,000)	0
Total health care and social assistance receipts/revenue, 2012 (\$1,000)	0
Total manufacturers shipments, 2012 (\$1,000)	0
Total retail sales, 2012 (\$1,000)	0
Total retail sales per capita, 2012	NA

<b>Transportation</b>	
Mean travel time to work (minutes), workers age 16 years+, 2015-2019	35.4

<b>Income &amp; Poverty</b>	
Median household income (in 2019 dollars), 2015-2019	\$113,407
Per capita income in past 12 months (in 2019 dollars), 2015-2019	\$56,405
Persons in poverty, percent	3.10%

<b>Geography</b>	
Population per square mile, 2010	4,560.10
Land area in square miles, 2010	3.02
FIPS Code	2568680

#### Description of Age-friendly Features

Swampscott has an AARP livability score of 57<sup>5</sup>. The index for neighboring towns are: Marblehead (56) and Nahant (55).

Swampscott Livability Index	57
Housing	27
Neighborhood	69
Transportation	59
Environment	59
Health	56
Engagement	67
Opportunity	60

<sup>5</sup> <https://livabilityindex.aarp.org/search#Swampscott+MA+USA>

With respect to housing affordability, there is 1 subsidized housing unit per 10,000 people, which places it in the top third.

With respect to neighborhoods, the town ranks in the top third for proximity to destinations such as grocery stores, farmer's markets, parks, jobs by transit, and mixed-use neighborhoods. The town ranks in the top third for personal safety and vacancy rates.

With respect to transportation, the two ranks in the top third for convenient transportation options and safe streets.

With respect to environment, the town ranks in the top third for air quality.

With respect to health, the town ranks in the top third with respect to healthy behaviors.

With respect to civic and social engagement, the town ranks in the top third with respect to internet access, civic engagement as measured by voting rates, and social engagement,

With respect to inclusion and possibilities, the town ranks in the top third with respect to economic and educational opportunities.

## Introduction to the plan

### Mission Statement

The Swampscott for All Ages Committee is dedicated to making Swampscott a more livable community for all residents to grow up and grow older together.

### Vision and Values

If the SfAA committee achieves its purpose, the community will have:

- safe, affordable, and well-designed housing that can be adapted as residents age and contributes to independence, security, and quality of life.
- affordable, accessible transportation, including that provided by the Senior Center, that allows residents to freely travel around the town and region, promotes participation, helps maintain networks and supports equity of mobility.
- public spaces that are accessible, walkable, well-lit, and well-marked, with shade and places to sit that allow for comfort and independence.
- a wide network of medical and non-medical services that promote well-being and quality of life.
- paid and non-paid employment that builds social capital and generates income and/or purpose.
- activities and events that are free or affordable, and held at convenient times and accessible by public transportation or ride hailing services.
- a town in which older adults are sought out to be included and consulted on community projects, planning initiatives, and all aspects of city life.
- effective distribution of information about events, programs and opportunities.



## Who was Involved in the Development of the Plan?

Genius ideas and monumental efforts of a Council on Aging Board Member, Robert Powell, sparked interest at the Select Board level in Swampscott which rather rapidly grew to Town Meeting financial support for the purchase of a Needs Assessment.

UMass Boston's Center for Social & Demographic Research on Aging within the Gerontology Institute was hired to conduct the Needs Assessment. In the meantime, numerous community members were invited to join in the process. Two dozen residents, with a range of backgrounds and expertise, volunteered to make the town more Age Friendly. This Swampscott for All Ages Committee was charged with ensuring that Swampscott is and remains an accessible and inclusive place in which to live, work and play.

### *Planning Committees*

The SfAA committee has created subcommittees structured around the livability principles embedded in the World Health Organization's Age Friendly Community framework<sup>6</sup>. Those subcommittees, each of which has a chair and, in some cases, a co-chair, are responsible for implementing the goals of their respective action plans.

Members from the following local committees and organizations are represented on the SfAA committee, including:

- Swampscott Police
- Swampscott Fire
- Board of Health
- Planning Board
- Greater Lynn Senior Services - Local ASAP
- Clergy
- Health care providers
- Housing Developers
- Non-Profit Health related organizations
- Council on Aging
- Rotary and other Civic Organizations

### *How Older Adults and Diverse Populations Will Be Included*

The Swampscott for All Ages Committee consist largely of older members, although there is not an age requirement. The Social Participation committee has been discussing ways to ensure that our older residents are able to participate in town meetings including this one. Since the beginning of Zoom meetings, we have been able to include many more people who are not comfortable driving to meetings in the dark.

The Town of Swampscott is working with all town committees to train members about the importance of diversity. We are continuously striving to be more inclusive all. It is rather challenging in Swampscott since our population is overwhelmingly white. We are currently working to recruit someone from our Russian population, which is the largest ethnic group represented in Swampscott.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://extranet.who.int/agefriendlyworld/age-friendly-cities-framework/>

### *How the Age-friendly Assessment was Conducted and Demographics of Residents Who Participated in Listening Sessions or Surveys*

The Swampscott age-friendly assessment was produced by the Center for Social & Demographic Research on Aging, a research unit within the Gerontology Institute at the University of Massachusetts Boston McCormack School, on behalf of the Swampscott for All Ages Committee and the Town of Swampscott.

Research in support of the assessment began in the March of 2019 with a community forum held at Swampscott High School. Approximately 100 residents and community stakeholders gathered to share their insights regarding the strengths and challenges of growing older in the Town as well as their hopes for future improvements. Subsequent data collection included a resident survey that was mailed to all residents age 55 and older in May 2019. A total of 1,645 surveys were received for a response rate of 33%. Among them, 290 surveys were completed online, 90 of which were received from residents under age 55. In addition, several key Town documents were reviewed, six key-informant interviews were conducted with Town leaders and those providing direct service to older residents, and four focus groups were facilitated in the summer of 2019 with residents of a variety of ages as well as community stakeholder representatives.

### *Key Lessons that Will Impact Plan*

#### **Outdoor Spaces & Buildings**

Availability of shaded seating, signage, public restrooms, and handicap accessibility were discussed as barriers to getting out in the community by a portion of respondents. These improvements to outdoor spaces have been named in other planning processes taken up by the Town; and thus, ensuring that the public is kept informed of the progress being made could be a valuable effort. Focus group participants and key informants also highlighted the lack of community space for residents of all generations to gather in Town. In fact, 39% of survey respondents reported that there are not enough places to go in Swampscott for leisure and socialization—and this was truer for those respondents under age 60. Participants described their travels to nearby communities to access public spaces like this; but requested better connections with these communities. For example, transportation and information about what is going on in such close proximity to Swampscott was requested. When it comes to public buildings and opportunities for social participations—opportunities for Swampscott to engage in an “age friendly region” effort became clear.

#### **Transportation**

Most survey respondents reported driving themselves as the way they get around. Although there are public transportation options and ride sharing services available in Swampscott, barriers to access were identified by older residents. Two gaps in transportation for Swampscott residents were identified: one is the ability to easily get around locally in Swampscott or to neighboring communities like Marblehead or Salem; and the other is access to reliable and convenient medical transportation for both the patients and those older family members who wish to visit their loved ones. More than 40% of survey respondents reported walking or biking as modes of transportation, highlighting the importance of walkability and safe streets for residents of all ages. Forty-five percent of respondents reported being dissatisfied with sidewalk quality and 30% dissatisfied with lighting along walkways.

#### **Housing and Economic Security**

Efforts to identify and address challenges associated with housing have been underway in Swampscott for some time. Information gathered for this study focuses on two intersecting aspects of housing as it relates to livability in Swampscott. Housing affordability is identified as a key barrier to age friendliness of the community. The number one concern respondents gave about aging in Swampscott is the cost of housing and maintaining housing. More than two-thirds of respondents under age 60 would prefer a smaller single-family home in the future, while respondents age 60-79 would prefer an apartment or condominium; and among those respondents age 80 and older, senior independent living communities are preferred. More than half of survey respondents reported that their current residence does not have a bedroom and bathroom on the first floor. As well, shortfalls in the availability of housing options are identified including not just more affordable units; but lack of opportunities to reduce costs associated with living in Swampscott for older residents or regulations that prohibit the use of the existing housing stock for the development of alternative housing models like cohousing or accessory dwellings.

### **Social Participation**

Two kinds of social participation were included in this study of Swampscott residents: formal opportunities like attending the senior center or participating in social clubs and informal opportunities like talking with neighbors, or getting together friends and family. There was consensus that although the Swampscott Senior Center provides invaluable service—its ability to meet the growing and evolving needs of Swampscott residents is limited. Only 18% of respondents had ever been to the Senior Center and many provided ideas for ways that social opportunities can be expanded or developed—all would require additional capacity in terms of space and staff. Overall, the majority of Swampscott respondents reported high levels of social connection. In addition, there is a strong willingness to help fellow residents with small tasks when needed — 91% of survey respondents reported that they do provide neighbors with help or they would if they were asked. That said, there is a segment of the population that can be identified as prone to social isolation. For example, 18% of survey respondents report not having talked with a neighbor in the past month and 23% of respondents get together in person with friends or family once a month or less, and 17% were dissatisfied with opportunities to engage informally with neighbors. These findings illustrate an opportunity to strengthen social participation opportunities to reduce risk of isolation in later life.

### **Respect & Social Inclusion**

During the community forum and in focus group conversations, residents described the “small town feel” and inclusive nature of Swampscott that they valued so deeply. Although survey results indicate an unevenness in this experience. When asked if they have ever felt excluded, 17% of respondents said yes. The most common reasons for feeling this way included: income (34%), age (27%), and religion or cultural background (17%). Many respondents wrote in other reasons for feeling excluded and the most commonly reported reason was not being a Swampscott native---or in other words, feeling like an outsider in their own town. In addition, over 25% of survey respondents disagreed that local policymakers take into account the interests and concerns of older residents. Improving lines of communication and opportunities for advocacy could improve this public perception.

### **Civic Engagement & Employment**

Most survey respondents were satisfied with volunteer opportunities and opportunities to get involved in local government (59%; and 64% respectively); but more than one third of respondents reported “I

don't know" about these two aspects of community living. This suggests a lack of awareness of opportunities for volunteer work or civic engagement. Considering ways that residents can be more easily made aware of these opportunities is a priority within this domain. Not surprisingly, most residents under age 60 are still working full time while among those respondents over age 60, more than two-thirds are retired. A segment of Swampscott's older residents is looking for work and more are working part-time. This finding suggests the appetite for continued involvement in the workforce among older residents.

### **Communication & Information**

Nearly every aspect of an age friendly community relies on communication and information. This includes both information relayed to residents; but also the ability for organizations, departments and other stakeholder groups to communicate among each other. Local newspaper, word of mouth, and social media were the most commonly reported methods of obtaining information. While most participants have access to the internet, 21% of respondents age 80 and older do not. These findings highlight the necessity of a multi-media approach. When asked specifically about programs offered by the Swampscott Senior Center and other community supports and health services, large numbers of respondents indicated "I don't know." Although these individuals may not yet have a need for these programs and services—this finding makes clear the work to be done around education future generations of older adults and their families about the resources available them in support of aging in place.

### **Community Supports & Health Services**

Participants highlighted the strength of being in such close proximity to high-quality health services as an aspect of Swampscott that makes it an ideal place to age. However, the second most commonly cited concern about remaining in Swampscott over time was the idea of maintaining healthy and functional ability to remain living independently; and securing the necessary supports to do so affordably. Twenty-four percent of Swampscott residents have at least one disability. Almost half of survey respondents reported providing care to someone who was disabled, frail, or struggling with a physical or mental health condition; and among those under age 60, 67% reported that this was challenging for them to provide this care and meet their other responsibilities. Further, 49% of survey respondents reported that they did not know who to contact in Swampscott if they or someone in their family should need help accessing social services, health services, or municipal services. These two stark findings highlight the importance of communication and outreach about existing community supports and health services-- particularly to those providing care.

### **Who Will Manage Implementation of the Plan?**

The chairs of the various SfAA subcommittees will manage the implementation of the plan, along with collaborating organizations such as the Council on Aging, Seaglass Village, the town of Swampscott, including Police and Fire Departments, Swampscott Schools, local civic organizations and other town committees.

## Domain Specific Action Plans

### Domain 1: Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

Accessible, well-lit, well-marked, with useful equipment, places to sit, congregate, and enjoy activities independently.

#### Goal #1: Improve walkability

(Note: Swampscott is currently being assessed for ADA-compliance)

##### *Essential Activities*

- Create programs to help residents comply with the Snow and Ice Bylaw, which requires that all property owners clear out the snow and ice adjacent to their property. The committee will identify residents who need a waiver, create a list of neighbors/volunteers to shovel, and seek ways to make it easier to receive a waiver at no cost.

##### *Target date for completion of each activity's beginning and ending dates*

- The Council on Aging/Senior Center in concert with the SfAA committee and other entities began creating a program to help residents comply with the Snow and Ice Bylaw in late 2021 and will launch this program by the close of 2021.

##### *Organization or individual responsible for each activity, plus collaborating organizations*

- The organizations responsible for helping residents comply with the Snow and Ice Bylaw, as well as the collaborating organizations include the Swampscott Council on Aging/Senior Center, Swampscott High School and Swampscott Town Hall.

##### *Resources needed to complete each task in the action steps*

- Swampscott Town Hall needs to collect names of residents who requested the waiver in late 2021. The names of those residents then need to be matched with volunteer Swampscott High School students wishing to gain community service credits. The Swampscott Senior Center staff will coordinate efforts.

##### *Indicators (and available baseline data) of progress toward the goals*

- The indicator of progress will be the percent of needy residents receiving assistance from students.

#### Goal #2: Expand/better utilize space at Senior Center

##### *Essential activities*

- Increase effective use of current Senior Center space.
- Upgrade Senior Center stove and ventilation.
- Seek ways for COA and older residents to share space with the Swampscott High School.
- Discuss and investigate locations and funding for a new state-of-the-art community life/senior center.

##### *Target date for completion of each activity's beginning and ending dates*

- In June 2021 the COA purchased lighter and movable furniture that allows the dining room to be converted into an exercise space throughout the week. This space now allows for larger exercise classes with adequate space as of June 2021. The Senior Center also increased in November 2021 the number of hours is open, which has also increased the capacity of the building.

- Plans are underway starting in FY21-22 to increase the kitchen's cooking capacity with the addition of a larger oven and proper ventilation.
- Swampscott's Director of Aging Services began seeking ways for the COA and older residents to share space with the Swampscott High School in 2021. Those ways will be identified in 2021 and implemented on an ongoing basis.
- A SfAA committee member served on the Hadley School Reuse Advisory Committee, which was formed in 2020 to study the potential reuse of the Hadley Elementary School. The Hadley School Reuse Advisory Committee studied and reported back in August 2021, in part, on the feasibility of re-using all or a portion of the existing Hadley School building for public, civic, commercial, and/or non-market rate housing uses. See [https://www.swampscottma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf1296/f/uploads/hadley\\_reuse\\_report\\_-\\_august\\_2021-final.pdf](https://www.swampscottma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf1296/f/uploads/hadley_reuse_report_-_august_2021-final.pdf).

*Organization or individual responsible for each activity, plus collaborating organizations*

- The primary organization responsible for each activity is the COA, and the collaborating organizations include the SfAA and Swampscott Town Hall and Facilities Director.

*Resources needed to complete each task in the action steps*

- Presence on committees to further agenda for seniors.

*Indicators (and available baseline data) of progress toward the goals*

- The number of hours of operation at the Senior Center, the number of seniors receiving services at the Senior Center, and the number of new participants.

*Ideas for Action for Years 2-5*

- Explore use of volunteer drivers through FISH and TRIP programs and include the transport of caregivers or visitors in these programs.
- Increase the number of public restrooms. Determine areas of need.
- Create a map of walks, public restrooms, bus stops, bus stops with benches and/or shelters, bike lanes, handicapped parking on public ways, and handicapped-accessible areas. The map would contain, among other things, a list/diagrams of varying-length walks around town, describing sidewalk/traffic conditions, shaded seating. See Transportation, Goal #4, Action Item #1.
- Improve/augment outdoor seating, including that which is shaded. Identify need at beaches, lawn areas, playgrounds, and bus stops.
- Identify locations for indoor and outdoor pickleball courts.
- Create plant pollinator garden in the Swampscott high school quad.
- Increasing accessibility within the Town to make it easier for older adults with or without a disability to take advantage of Swampscott amenities. For example, provide signage around Town in large print for those with decreased vision.

## Domain 2: Transportation

Affordable, accessible transportation allows residents to freely travel around the city, promotes participation, helps maintain networks and supports equity of mobility.

Goal #1: Expand options for medical transportation

### *Essential Activities*

- Create a “Village” with volunteers to assist in transportation. (See Housing and Social Participation Goals.)

### *Target date for completion of each activity’s beginning and ending dates*

- Village formed in 2021.

### *Organization or individual responsible for each activity, plus collaborating organizations*

- SfAA, COA, and Village

### *Resources needed to complete each task in the action steps*

- Village administration, grant funding, and volunteers.

### *Indicators (and available baseline data) of progress toward the goals*

- Village will report number of rides provided.

Goal #2: Conduct a feasibility study or procure funds for pilot testing a local fixed-route Swampscott only or multitown shuttle.

### *Essential Activities*

- Request a proposal from GLSS.

### *Target date for completion of each activity’s beginning and ending dates*

- Request made in 2020.

### *Organization or individual responsible for each activity, plus collaborating organizations*

- SfAA and GLSS.

### *Resources needed to complete each task in the action steps*

- SfAA volunteers and GLSS management

### *Indicators (and available baseline data) of progress toward the goals*

Proposal received in 2020. Deemed Infeasible.

### *Ideas for Action for Years 2-5*

- Pursue community development grant and other funding sources.
- Consider ways to make commuter rail access less expensive for older adults. Host Senior CharlieCard event at SfAA Talk About Town where older residents can apply for a Senior CharlieCard.
- Explore options to partner with Salem, which recently conducted a shuttle feasibility study, as well as Lynn, Marblehead, and Nahant.
- Review bus stops in Swampscott to ensure they have benches, shelters, and flat pathways for access. Create a map of walks, public restrooms, bus stops, bus stops with benches and/or shelters, bike lanes, handicapped parking on public ways, and handicapped-accessible areas. The

map would contain, among other things, a list/diagrams of varying-length walks around town, describing sidewalk/traffic conditions, shaded seating. See Outdoor Spaces and Buildings Goals.

- Make ride share services more Age Friendly. Consider profiling local Uber/Lyft drivers so that residents are more familiar with local drivers. Host workshops on ridesharing “apps” at the public library. Explore Go-Go Grandparent, a ride-sharing service for older adults. Explore NewMo.
- Identify barriers to outdoor spaces. To inform Swampscott’s “Complete Streets” initiative, convene a walking group that identifies barriers to access outdoor spaces, dangerous intersections, connectivity challenges, tree interference, sidewalk disrepair, etc.) Work with Outdoor Spaces and Buildings subcommittee.



### Domain 3: Housing

Safe, affordable and well-designed housing that can be adapted as residents age contributes to independence, security, and quality of life.

Goal #1: Increase opportunity for public discourse around affordable senior housing and increase community connections to senior housing developments in Swampscott.

#### *Essential Activities*

- Follow up with Swampscott Housing Authority (SHA) Board and management requesting their participation in the SFAA movement.

#### *Target date for completion of each activity's beginning and ending dates*

- Two new members of the Swampscott Housing Authority (SHA) joined in 2021. Unfortunately one has dropped off of the SHA and there remains an open seat.

#### *Organization or individual responsible for each activity, plus collaborating organizations*

- SHA Board and Management

#### *Resources needed to complete each task in the action steps*

- Participation in events and meetings.

#### *Indicators (and available baseline data) of progress toward the goals*

- Number of representatives who are openly communicating and working with the Town to help address issues.

Goal #2: Consider opportunities to reduce property taxes for those struggling to meet their needs.

#### *Essential Activities*

- Advertise, promote and educate the community to increase the participation rate of those taking advantage of the Town's existing tax work-off program.
- Review the details of the tax work-off program to identify any potential areas for improvement.
- Survey peer communities to seek out best practices.
- Ensure that the tax work-off program is well staffed at the upcoming SFAA Resource Fair.
- Year 2: Promote tax abatement program through Talk About Town.

#### *Target date for completion of each activity's beginning and ending dates*

- Dec 2021

#### *Organization or individual responsible for each activity, plus collaborating organizations*

- Town Hall
- Town offices that are able to engage volunteers

#### *Resources needed to complete each task in the action steps*

- Advertisement of program
- Increase of opportunities for volunteers

*Indicators (and available baseline data) of progress toward the goals*

- Increase in the number of residents actively engaged in volunteer positions with the town and are reducing their taxes.

Goal #3: Investigate strategies for developing a “village” in Swampscott.

*Essential Activities*

- Support the overall SfAA goal of creating a Village for Swampscott.
- Continue to educate the community about the Village concept.
- Join and take advantage of resources such as Village to Village Network. (See Transportation and Social Participation Goals.)

*Target date for completion of each activity’s beginning and ending dates*

- Launch village by close of 2021

*Organization or individual responsible for each activity, plus collaborating organizations*

- Seaglass Village created a separate board of directors and has recruited a volunteer force to provide help to members. The Village is working with Marblehead and Nahant to grow to a viable organization. First Church Congregational in Swampscott donates office space and community space for the programs of the village. Other community organizations offer referrals, opportunities to promote the program and collaborations. Other groups currently in collaboration include: COAs, SPUR, local churches, local cable stations, press, Rotary, ElderAct, and town offices.

*Resources needed to complete each task in the action steps*

- Fundraising efforts are underway to cover start-up costs and supplement program costs including a part time director.

*Indicators (and available baseline data) of progress toward the goals*

- Opening date of Dec 1, 2021.

Goal #4: Promote home repair and modification so that current housing is appropriate as people age.

*Essential Activities*

- Obtain and disseminate information promoting the HOME funding programs aimed at housing rehabilitation
- Investigate if Habitat for Humanity is involved with any projects to help seniors with low-cost repairs
- Develop a list of Home Standards for senior living and make the information available to the community.
- Develop a list of contractors that could be vetted by the Town or through the “Village” and classified as Age Friendly Contractors so that seniors could have confidence using their services.
- Tap AARP resources, including HomeFit Guide for presentation at the Stay Connected.

*Target date for completion of each activity’s beginning and ending dates*

- Contacts and sharing of resources began in 2020 is currently ongoing through this committee as well as Seaglass Village. Habitat for Humanity and CEDAC have supplied information and contact

information. Flyers have been mailed to homes, newspaper articles have been published and promotion continues through various channels including Town website, COA and Seaglass Village. Completion date: 2022.

*Organization or individual responsible for each activity, plus collaborating organizations*

- CEDAC, Habitat for Humanity, Swampscott High School, Tech School, AARP, Senior Center, Seaglass Village

*Resources needed to complete each task in the action steps*

- Communication tools to share via press, TV, Internet and in meetings.

*Indicators (and available baseline data) of progress toward the goals*

- Persons using these resources.

Goal #5: Investigate opportunities to create additional housing units in Swampscott.

*Essential Activities*

1. Years 1 – 5: Brainstorm possible new housing unit creation such as re-use of obsolete school buildings, other retired town owned properties, and potential privately owned properties including but not limited to Hadley School, St. Johns Convent Building, and General Glover Property.

*Target date for completion of each activity's beginning and ending dates*

- Start date: 2020. Investigation will be ongoing.

*Organization or individual responsible for each activity, plus collaborating organizations*

- Hadley Reuse Committee, Swampscott Office of Community and Economic Development

*Resources needed to complete each task in the action steps*

- Attendance on Committees

*Indicators (and available baseline data) of progress toward the goals*

- Various committees and Select Board are intimately aware of affordable housing options and opportunities throughout the town.

Goal #6: Review current zoning regulations to identify opportunities to create more alternative housing options in Swampscott.

*Essential Activities*

1. Review best practices of surrounding peer communities
2. Analyze the potential for modifications to current zoning regulations to allow for more creative housing solutions.

*Target date for completion of each activity's beginning and ending dates*

- Presentation of information to Town Meeting in spring 2022

*Organization or individual responsible for each activity, plus collaborating organizations*

- Swampscott Office of Community and Economic Development, Town Zoning Committee

*Resources needed to complete each task in the action steps*

- Review current zoning, research and present alternate updates

*Indicators (and available baseline data) of progress toward the goals*

- Pass of modified Zoning regulations for accessory units at spring Town Meeting.

*Ideas for Action for Years 2-5*

- Host a Senior Housing Summit to provide a platform for our senior residents to be heard and to document their concerns and thoughts around affordable senior housing.
- Host a series of 2-3-minute mini topics that could be communicated at Select Board meeting's public comment segment to highlight specific items of interest concerning affordable senior housing and increasing community connections to housing issues.
- Reach out to the regional Vocational Technical school to identify any low cost or volunteer programs that could help seniors. e.g., simple landscaping, plumbing repair, electrical repair, installation of safety equipment, or light mechanical repairs to their homes, etc.
- Discuss implementation of a student volunteer program with SHS for low-cost simple tasks that students could do for seniors e.g. computer/internet/phone setup, move furniture, hang curtains, yard maintenance, etc.
- Generate a standard list of simple repairs and tasks that could be matched with funding opportunities to benefit seniors
- Investigate with GLSS to determine if there are services that could do home site visits for seniors and assess their needs with respect to safety, comfort, and basic needs.
- Contact MAPC for information regarding any existing resources that provide assistance to seniors in maintaining their homes.

#### Domain 4: Social Participation

Older adults are included and consulted on community projects, planning initiatives, and all aspects of city life.

Goal #1 Initiate a Facebook page for older adults to share knowledge and resources as well as make requests and find peers with similar interests in attending events.

*Essential Activities*

- Work with Communication subcommittee to create Facebook page, and website.

*Target date for completion of each activity's beginning and ending dates*

- Summer 2020 launched Facebook

*iv. Organization or individual responsible for each activity, plus collaborating organizations*

- SfAA Communications Domain

*Resources needed to complete each task in the action steps*

- Computer technology

*Indicators (and available baseline data) of progress toward the goals*

- SfAA facebook page being utilized. Number of followers.

Goal #2 Explore the possibility of increasing the number of active adult events such as bowling, wine tasting, or an indoor walking group.

*Essential Activities*

- Create a “Village” to create new groups for socialization. (See Transportation and Housing Goals.)
- Open the Senior center later in the day, or early evening to attract active adults.

*Target date for completion of each activity’s beginning and ending dates*

- Seaglass Village began with new social groups in the summer of 2021.
- Senior Center began offering Wed evening events beginning in November 2021. Wine Tasting, Wreath making classes, social events are being planned through the end of 2021. Outdoor walking group started in September 2021.

*Organization or individual responsible for each activity, plus collaborating organizations*

- Volunteers including Seaglass Village board members are participating in outings to theater, restaurants, golf, and gatherings on the beach.

*Resources needed to complete each task in the action steps*

- Seaglass Village volunteer to organize social events and people interested in participating.

*Indicators (and available baseline data) of progress toward the goals*

- Younger adults engaging in new activities. Numerous younger seniors are volunteering at Senior Center.

Goal #3 Identify neighborhood-based programs or mechanisms to strengthen informal networks in neighborhoods and ensure that existing neighborhood-based activities are inclusive of older residents.

*Essential Activities*

- Partner with Swampscott Recreation department to pursue activities.

*Target date for completion for each activity’s beginning and ending dates*

- Initiated collaborations with the Swampscott Recreation and Library groups.

*Organization or individual responsible for each activity, plus collaborating organizations*

- Director of Town Recreation, Library Director, Senior Center

*Resources needed to complete each task in the action steps*

- Communication, compatible activities.

*Indicators (and available baseline data) of progress toward the goals*

- Number of events shared between organizations. Number of Participants.

## Domain 5: Respect and Social Inclusion

Older adults are included and consulted on community projects, planning initiatives, and all aspects of city life.

Goal #1: Encourage Swampscott restaurants to participate in the Purple Table reservation program, a program that makes eating out more enjoyable for those with dementia or other conditions.

### *Essential Activities*

- Develop team to design training for Purple Table Reservation program

### *Target date for completion of each activity's beginning and ending dates*

- Program designed by April 2022
- Restaurants engaged and trained by December 2022

### *Organization or individual responsible for each activity, plus collaborating organizations*

- Dementia Friendly team, local restaurants.

### *Resources needed to complete each task in the action steps*

- Promotional materials, training location.

### *Indicators (and available baseline data) of progress toward the goals*

- Number of restaurants participating in program.

### *Ideas for action for years 2-5*

- Promote Purple Table program to restaurants. Train staff. Promote program in Swampscott.
- Designate a group of resident advocates who will consistently attend board and committee meetings to raise awareness of older adult issues. Improve accessibility of Town-sponsored meetings. Change existing policy to run COA vans for longer hours so that elders can attend town board & commission, events, and Annual Town Meeting.
- Consider accessibility of public events, including seating, restrooms and cost to ensure that all residents feel welcome and supported. Town Meeting Space: Place camera crews in better locations to ensure that handicap access areas and walkways are not obstructed. Parking for residents with disabilities: Create additional handicap spots in town, especially at the senior center. Meet need to have more hearing aids for the hard of hearing, particularly during Town meeting and other such events.

## Domain 6: Civic Engagement and Employment

Paid employment builds social capital and generates income and purpose. Being involved in issues that affect the lives of older adults contributes to empowerment and affects social change

Goal #1: Launch Stay Connected.

### *Essential Activities:*

- Launch a webinar series that addresses various elements of the age-friendly domains and goals from UMass Needs Assessment

*Target date for completion of each activity's beginning and ending dates*

- The Stay Connected Series was launched in 2020, and in late 2021 evolved into a new program called Talk About Town. Topics pertinent to SfAA covered via zoom, recorded and shared through the Town Website as well as over the local cable TV station.

*Organization or individual responsible for each activity, plus collaborating organizations*

- Swampscott Office of Community and Economic Development facilitated the taping, Swampscott High School posted the programs on the TV and the Town Hall posted the recordings on the Town Website.

*Resources needed to complete each task in the action steps*

- Computer recording and internet and TV resources.

*Indicators (and available baseline data) of progress toward the goals*

- Recorded and posted over a dozen programs.

*Ideas for Action for Years 2-5*

- Hold a Resource Fair. Participate in SfAA resource fair that will address various elements of the age-friendly domains and goals from UMass Needs Assessment. Designate a group of resident advocates who will consistently attend board and committee meetings to raise awareness of older adult issues
- As more residents begin to retire, explore ways for them to get connected with volunteer opportunities and post-retirement work.
- Host a "retirement fair" and invite residents who have recently turned 65 as well as business and local organizations seeking part time employees or volunteers
- Facilitate "retirement groups" where groups of residents can meet regularly to develop purpose, make connections, and work through challenges.
- Expand programming around retirement planning or finding a post-retirement job
- Continue providing opportunities for residents to volunteer and stay civically engaged intown activities. Assure that residents can easily identify the opportunities that already exist through the Town or other local organizations and groups.
- Develop an all ages civic academy that focuses on educating residents about municipal processes and empowering residents to advocate on behalf of themselves and their peers.

## Domain 7: Communication and Information

An effective distribution of information about events, programs and opportunities, preferably in centralized locations, is an essential feature of an age-friendly city.

### Goal #1: Use Social Media to Disseminate Information

#### *Essential Activities*

- Review best practices of surrounding peer communities
- Create a Facebook page

#### *Target date for completion of each activity's beginning and ending dates*

- The review of best practices of surrounding peer communities began in late 2019 was completed in early 2020.
- The committee created its Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/swampscottforallages/>) in late 2019.

#### *Organization or individual responsible for each activity, plus collaborating organizations*

- The person responsible for each activity was the chair of the Communication and Information committee, Jennifer Nisbet. Member of that committee and other domain representative can be made administrators of the page.

#### *Resources needed to complete each task in the action steps*

- None

#### *Indicators (and available baseline data) of progress toward the goals*

- The Facebook page was created and shared with other local social media groups/page. As of November 2021, 520 people like the page and 605 people follow the page.

### Goal #2: Create a Swampscott for All Ages Website

#### *Essential Activities*

- Review websites of neighboring age-friendly communities, including Salem, Mass.
- Request estimates from developers to create a website.

#### *Target date for completion of each activity's beginning and ending dates*

- The committee began reviewing websites of neighboring age-friendly communities in early 2020 and completed its work in mid-2020.
- The committee began surveying website developers in early 2020 and completed its work mid-2020.

#### *Organization or individual responsible for each activity, plus collaborating organizations*

- Domain 7 committee members were responsible for each activity and collaborated with Town of Swampscott staff to create a page on the town's website.

#### *Resources needed to complete each task in the action steps*

- The committee needs to secure funding (possibly a grant) to create a separate website.

#### *Indicators (and available baseline data) of progress toward the goals*

- The committee determined in mid-2020 that SFAA would be unable to create a website in the absence of funding and created instead a page on the Town of Swampscott website,



<https://www.swampscottma.gov/swampscott-all-ages-committee>, where SfAA information and resources are published.

### Goal #3: Create a Guest Column in Local Newspaper to Engage Older Residents with Relevant Topics

#### *Essential Activities*

- Contact local paper to determine if it will publish monthly column featuring SfAA topics, and establish the parameters (article length, etc.).
- Select a name and tagline for the column and identify topics.

#### *Target date for completion of each activity's beginning and ending dates*

- The committee began and completed this effort in early 2020.

#### *Organization or individual responsible for each activity, plus collaborating organizations*

- Jennifer Nisbet and other domain 7 committee members were responsible for these activities and collaborated with the editor of the Swampscott Reporter.

#### *Resources needed to complete each task in the action steps*

- None

#### *Indicators (and available baseline data) of progress toward the goals*

- Template and parameters set for article creation
- Name of column and tag line decided: Perennial Sentiment – Embracing the aging process while evolving, adapting, and growing anew.

### Goal #4: Create Online Virtual Events for Community During COVID

#### *Essential activities:*

- Decide on which online platform to use (Zoom)
- Brainstorm and select topics and speakers for “Stay Connected, a series of programs addressing concerns during the time of COVID-19.
- Research how to record and post events on the town’s educational access TV

#### *Target date for completion or each activity's beginning and ending dates*

- The committee began the “Stay Connected” series in the spring of 2020 and it continued through fall of 2021. A new in-person series hosted by the Swampscott Senior Center was launched in the fall of 2021.

#### *Organization or individual responsible for each activity, plus collaborating organizations*

- Domain 7 committee and other domain committee members were responsible. The collaborating organizations included the Town of Swampscott and Swampscott Cable.

#### *Resources needed to complete each task in the action steps*

- The domain 7 committee coordinated with town employees on setting up the Zoom meetings and getting the recordings uploaded to the town’s educational access channel.

#### *Indicators (and available baseline data) of progress toward the goals*

- The committee was able to schedule 1-2 speakers a month to present via Zoom.

- Recorded events were uploaded to the town educational access TV and scheduled to play at various times. See <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=817238135484051>.

*Ideas for Action for Years 2-5*

- Consider scheduling quarterly meetings of key employees who work for organizations that provide services to older adults, providing an avenue to share information. Consider a human service networking event.
- Continue to disseminate information in multiple forms and provide print copies of important information in places other than the Senior Center and utilize local newspaper as a mechanism for getting information distributed.
- Explore the possibility of having a centralized social calendar for events happening around Swampscott as a way of making residents aware of programs (e.g., library, Senior Center, recreation, church groups).
- Disseminate information about existing information channels in Town. Consider developing a “how to” guide that includes instructions on things like how to post something to the Town website, how to use the robo-call system, how to submit a letter to the editor.

## Domain 8: Community and Health Services

A wide network of medical and nonmedical services promotes well-being and quality of life.

Goal #1 Improve community knowledge about available services.

### *Essential Activities*

- While broadening awareness overall, take special efforts to improve awareness and access to those who could benefit from services, especially those with participation limitations or who are providing care to someone. Host Stay Connected Series on various health related topics for airing on Cable TV

### *Target date for completion of each activity's beginning and ending dates*

- Start in 2020. Complete over a dozen Stay Connected Series regarding Community and Health Services including: COVID vaccination and safety, Protection from Scams, Dementia Friendly training, Health hearing. No ending date: Ongoing.

### *Organization or individual responsible for each activity, plus collaborating organizations*

- Police, local physicians, local dementia specialists, Audiologists.

### *Resources needed to complete each task in the action steps*

- Zoom and taping and then connecting with the local Cable station.

### *Indicators (and available baseline data) of progress toward the goals*

- Increased knowledge and access to services.

Goal #2 Create opportunities to connect the Greater Lynn Senior Services (GLSS) with family caregivers.

### *Essential Activities*

- Contact GLSS.

### *Target date for completion of each activity's beginning and ending dates*

- Met with GLSS Executive Director, Kathy Burns in 2021 and now offer articles from them in our monthly newsletter and will continue ongoing.
- As of 2021, GLSS is now providing classes through the Senior Center.

### *Organization or individual responsible for each activity, plus collaborating organizations*

- Senior Center and GLSS

### *Resources needed to complete each task in the action steps*

- Programs provided by GLSS are largely grant funded. Swampscott Senior Center promotes the programs, registers attendees and provides the space for classes.
- GLSS is delivering holiday packages to residents who are receiving Meals on Wheels.

### *Indicators (and available baseline data) of progress toward the goals*

- Chronic disease class and Balance class are both full for Fall 2021 and we are scheduling another round for Balance and a Diabetes class for Winter 2021.

Goal #3: Increase staff and building capacity of the Swampscott Senior Center

*Essential Activities:*

- Work with tri-chairs and Town Administrator to solicit funding.

*Target date for completion of each activity's beginning and ending dates*

- Hired Director of Aging Services in 2021.

*Organization or individual responsible for each activity, plus collaborating organizations*

- Town Administrator, COA and SfAA Committees.
- Increasing building capacity – see Outdoor Spaces and Buildings Goal.

*Resources needed to complete each task in the action steps*

- Funding for position.
- Continue to expand hours of operation for Senior Center.
- Research opportunities for a new Community Life Center.

*Indicators (and available baseline data) of progress toward the goals*

- Position filled in 2021. Goal complete.

Goal #4 Expand and develop dementia-friendly initiatives.

*Essential Activities*

- Establish Swampscott as a dementia-friendly community.
- Pilot test a memory café.
- Investigate the Purple Table Reservation program for implementation. (See Social Inclusion.)
- Expand awareness of dementia with all Town of Swampscott employees.

*Target date for completion of each activity's beginning and ending dates*

- Swampscott is officially a Dementia Friendly Community as of 2020. We began a Memory Café in 2021 at the Senior Center on a monthly basis. We are currently working with trainers to train town employees (to be completed in 2022). We hosted a Stay Connected Program on Dementia Friendly Training in 2021. Town Library staff are also trained in 2021.

*Organization or individual responsible for each activity, plus collaborating organizations*

- All town employees, support from town elected officials, local businesses and restaurants.

*Resources needed to complete each task in the action steps*

- Trainers, financial resources for the Memory Cafes.

*Indicators (and available baseline data) of progress toward the goals*

- Completed several of these initiatives. The committee is eager to spread training to local businesses, particularly restaurants to create Purple Table reservations.

*Ideas for action years 2-5*

- Work with other subcommittees to hold a Resource Fair in 2022.
- Establish a collaboration between Swampscott Fire, Police and COA to identify at risk seniors. Develop a registry of at-risk seniors, especially those living with dementia.
- Continue to increase building capacity of Swampscott Senior Center.

- Improve public education about dementia, access to adult day programs, and businesses that are trained to interact with people with dementia may be considered.

## Appendix

The following is Swampscott's 2019 Community Needs Assessment.



# Swampscott for All Ages: A Community Needs Assessment

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Commissioned by the Town of Swampscott

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OCTOBER 2019







# Town of Swampscott

Office of the

Town Administrator

Elihu Thomson Administrative Building  
22 Monument Avenue



Sean R. Fitzgerald  
Town Administrator

Tel: (781) 596-8850  
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Dear Swampscott Resident:

These are exciting times for Swampscott and I am really pleased to report on the extraordinary work of our Swampscott For All Ages (SFAA) Initiative as we work hard to assure that Swampscott is a healthy and happy community for people of ALL ages.

While some of you may have just heard about this initiative, many of Swampscott's residents and seniors have participated in a number of programs, discussions, and surveys over the last year. I am excited to share in this report the culmination of feedback and ideas from Swampscott's residents who have provided their time, energy and ideas. The focus areas include: outdoor spaces and public buildings; broader transportation options; respect for diversity and social inclusion; communication and public information; housing choices; social participation; civic participation and employment; community and mental and physical health services. Respondents included Swampscott residents of all ages, those directly impacted by dementia, municipal providers, human service agencies, healthcare providers, representatives from finance and banking, media and information services, and private business.


This report is possible thanks to the hard work and expertise of the Gerontology Institute, Center for Social & Demographic Research on Aging at University of Massachusetts Boston. Special thanks to Dr. Caitlin Coyle and Rebecca Mailman for their flexibility and willingness to share a wealth of knowledge and experience with all the community members who participated, and for creating this report. The work and leadership of the Gerontology Institute was not possible without the support of Swampscott Select Board and the financial commitment of Town Meeting members to fund this study. We are deeply grateful to the Swampscott residents, community leaders, service providers, business owners, and municipal leaders who shared with us their time and insight into what can be done to make Swampscott a more age and dementia friendly community.

I am so proud that Swampscott is leading the way with age and dementia friendly initiatives. These efforts require deliberate and intentional steps to design a community that supports people of all ages and abilities and assure that the community meets the needs of all residents. This assessment and extraordinary report is one step that will help outline a number of key goals in this process.

We look forward to integrating the findings from this needs assessment into a Five-Year Action Plan in the coming months. The results of this study will serve as a guide in our planning going forward to strategically advance relevant policies, programs, and projects – creating Swampscott For All Ages.

Thank you for your support, vision and engagement as we truly make *Swampscott a Community for All Ages!*

Sincerely,

  
Sean Fitzgerald  
Town Administrator

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## Contributors and Acknowledgements

This report was produced by the Center for Social and Demographic Research on Aging (CSDRA), a research unit within the Gerontology Institute at UMass Boston's McCormack School. The CSDRA provides resources and research expertise to communities, non-governmental organizations, and other agencies through the Commonwealth.

Dr. Caitlin Coyle is primarily responsible for the contents of this report. Other contributors include Jan Mutchler, Nidya Velasco, Sue Berger, and Rebecca Mailman. We are thankful for the leadership of Robert Powell, Heidi Whear, and Marzie Galazka, tri-chairs of the Swampscott for All Ages Committee, who offered guidance at each step of this process. Other members of the Swampscott for All Ages Committee include:

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This report would not have been possible without the vision and support of Town Administrator, Sean Fitzgerald, and Town Meeting for approving the funding to produce this report. We are incredibly grateful to the residents of Swampscott and community stakeholders that shared their thoughts as part of the data collection.

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# Executive Summary

## Introduction

By the year 2030, 35% of Swampscott residents will be age 60 and older<sup>1</sup>. In response to this demographic shift as well as in response to the desire of most residents to remain living in their community, the resident leaders of Swampscott, with support of the Town, have embarked on the journey to become a more age friendly community. They call themselves the Swampscott for All Ages Committee. The Swampscott for All Ages initiative is meant to ensure that Swampscott is and remains a place where older adults can comfortably and safely age in place. It is a resident-led committee with strong municipal support. This report describes research undertaken by the Center for Social & Demographic Research on Aging within the Gerontology Institute at the University of Massachusetts Boston, on behalf of the Swampscott for All Ages Committee and the Town of Swampscott, to investigate the needs, interests, preferences, and opinions of Swampscott's residents age 60 and older. Structured around livability principles embedded in the World Health Organization's Age Friendly Community framework<sup>2</sup>, the Swampscott for All Ages initiative considers physical infrastructure as well as social and service environments as it seeks to strengthen livability for Swampscott's older residents. The contents of this report are designed to inform the Swampscott for All Ages Committee as it develops a plan for action to address the needs identified; and also intersect with and advise other ongoing efforts, including the development of the Swampscott Master Plan. This work also aligns with Governor Baker's plan for an Age Friendly State.

## Methods

Research in support of this report began in the March of 2019 with a community forum held at Swampscott High School. Approximately 100 residents and community stakeholders gathered to share their insights regarding the strengths and challenges of growing older in the Town as well as their hopes for future improvements. Subsequent data collection included a resident survey that was mailed to a sample of residents age 55 and older in May 2019. A total of 1,645 surveys were received for a response rate of 33%. Among them, 290 surveys were completed online, 90 of which were received from residents under age 55. In addition, several key Town documents were reviewed, six key-informant interviews were conducted with Town leaders and those providing direct service to older residents, and four focus groups were facilitated in the summer of 2019 with residents of a variety of ages as well as community stakeholder representatives.

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<sup>1</sup> Population projections are based on figures from the Donahue Institute. <http://www.donahue.umassp.edu/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://extranet.who.int/agefriendlyworld/Age-Friendly-cities-framework/>

## Select Findings and Priorities

### Housing and Economic Security

Efforts to identify and address challenges associated with housing have been underway in Swampscott for some time. Information gathered for this study focuses on two intersecting aspects of housing as it relates to livability in Swampscott. Housing affordability is identified as a key barrier to age friendliness of the community. The number one concern respondents gave about aging in Swampscott is the cost of housing and maintaining housing. More than two-thirds of respondents under age 60 would prefer a smaller single family home in the future, while respondents age 60-79 would prefer an apartment or condominium; and among those respondents age 80 and older, senior independent living communities are preferred. More than half of survey respondents reported that their current residence does not have a bedroom and bathroom on the first floor. As well, shortfalls in the availability of housing options are identified including not just more affordable units; but lack of opportunities to reduce costs associated with living in Swampscott for older residents or regulations that prohibit the use of the existing housing stock for the development of alternative housing models like cohousing or accessory dwellings. Based on these results, the following ideas for action are recommended:

### **Ideas for Action in Swampscott: Housing & Economic Security**

- Consider opportunities to reduce property taxes for those struggling to meet their needs. For example:
  - Freeze property taxes for those age 70 and older.
  - Expand access to existing property tax relief programs by raising the income limit for the tax work-off program.
  - Ensure that those who are already eligible for existing programs are aware of how to apply. Identify and communicate trusted resources for in-home supports (both home care and handyman services).
  - Adopt new property tax relief programs, including a senior tax deferral program.
- Investigate strategies for developing a “village” in Swampscott. This model is an opportunity for older residents to come together to share resources for services and increase social interaction.
  - Resource sharing may include transportation, meals, and errands.
- Promote home repair and modification so that current housing is appropriate as people age.
- Increase opportunity for public discourse around affordable senior housing.
- Continue to promote the recently amended requirement for accessory-dwelling units so that interested residents take up this opportunity.
- Develop mechanisms by which residents who remain living in single-family homes as they age remain connected to the community (e.g., via the senior center) in order to prevent social isolation and other types of crises.

- Consider targeting through mailings to homeowners of particular age groups educational materials about available opportunities and resources.
- Review current zoning regulations to identify opportunities to create more alternative housing options in Swampscott. For example, allowing congregate living of multiple older adults in existing large single-family homes.
- Increase community connections to senior housing developments in Swampscott.

### Transportation

Most survey respondents reported driving themselves as the way they get around. Although there are public transportation options and ride sharing services available in Swampscott, barriers to access were identified by older residents. Two gaps in transportation for Swampscott residents were identified: one is the ability to easily get around locally in Swampscott or to neighboring communities like Marblehead or Salem; and the other is access to reliable and convenient medical transportation for both the patients and those older family members who wish to visit their loved ones. More than 40% of survey respondents reported walking or biking as modes of transportation, highlighting the importance of walkability and safe streets for residents of all ages. Forty-five percent of respondents reported being dissatisfied with sidewalk quality and 30% dissatisfied with lighting along walkways. Based on these results, the following ideas for action are recommended:

### **Ideas for Action in Swampscott: Transportation & Walkability**

- Expand options for medical transportation.
  - Consider the use of volunteer drivers through developing a FISH program or TRIP program and include the transport of caregivers or visitors in these programs.
- Conduct a feasibility study or procure funds for pilot-testing a local shuttle in Swampscott.
  - Consider partnerships with Salem, Lynn, Marblehead and Nahant in this effort.
- Consider ways to make commuter rail access less expensive for older adults.
- Review bus stops in Swampscott to ensure they have benches, shelters, and flat pathways for access.
- Make ride share services more Age Friendly, considering ease of use, trust issues, and accessibility of vehicles.
  - Consider profiling local Uber/Lyft drivers so that residents are more familiar with local drivers.
  - Host workshops on ride-sharing “apps” at the public library, senior center and other venues.
  - Explore Go-Go Grandparent, a ride-sharing service for older adults.

- To inform Swampscott’s “Complete Streets” initiative<sup>3</sup>, convene a walking group that identifies barriers to access outdoor spaces.
  - Look for dangerous intersections, connectivity challenges, tree interference, sidewalk disrepair, etc.
- Work with neighboring communities to develop multi-town transportation solutions. See other regional transportation authorities for examples<sup>4</sup>. Include transportation stops at senior centers of participating communities.

### Outdoor Spaces & Buildings

Availability of shaded seating, signage, public restrooms, and handicap accessibility were also discussed as barriers to getting out in the community by a portion of respondents. These improvements to outdoor spaces have been named in other planning processes taken up by the Town; and thus, ensuring that the public is kept informed of the progress being made could be a valuable effort. Focus group participants and key informants also highlighted the lack of community space for residents of all generations to gather in Town. In fact, 39% of survey respondents reported that there are not enough places to go in Swampscott for leisure and socialization—and this was truer for those respondents under age 60. Participants described their travels to nearby communities to access public spaces like this; but requested better connections with these communities. For example, transportation and information about what is going on in such close proximity to Swampscott was requested. When it comes to public buildings and opportunities for social participations—opportunities for Swampscott to engage in an “age friendly region” effort became clear. Based on these results, the following ideas for action are recommended:

### Ideas for Action in Swampscott: Outdoor Spaces & Buildings

- Consider increasing accessibility within the Town to make it easier for older adults with or without a disability to take advantage of Swampscott amenities. For example, provide signage around Town in large print for those with decreased vision. Encourage Swampscott restaurants to participate in the Purple Table reservation program, a program that makes eating out more enjoyable for those with dementia or other conditions.

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<sup>3</sup>[http://www.swampscottma.gov/sites/swampscottma/files/uploads/swampscott\\_complete\\_streets\\_policy\\_development.pdf](http://www.swampscottma.gov/sites/swampscottma/files/uploads/swampscott_complete_streets_policy_development.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.gatra.org/index.php/tri-town-connector/>

- In support of recent plans for the downtown<sup>5</sup> and waterfront areas<sup>6</sup>—advocate for the completion of sidewalk and intersection improvements, added handicap parking, shaded seating, and public restrooms that will improve walkability.
- Create a mechanism for residents to be informed about sidewalk repair plans and progress. For example, make the public works permits publicly accessible or generate a map of sidewalk repairs and update as progress is made<sup>7</sup>.
- Using the “Snow Angels” program as a model, consider other seasonal tasks where older residents might need help. (e.g., leaf removal or lawn mowing).
- Consider the development of a community center that would offer more space for physical activity and community gathering space.
- Review the relationship between the COA and the Swampscott High School to ensure that older adults have some access to the indoor walking track and other amenities.
- Replicate the Town garden in other locations and consider age friendly design such as waist high beds for accessibility.

### Social Participation

Two kinds of social participation were included in this study of Swampscott residents: formal opportunities like attending the senior center or participating in social clubs and informal opportunities like talking with neighbors, or getting together friends and family. There was consensus that although the Swampscott Senior Center provides invaluable service—its ability to meet the growing and evolving needs of Swampscott residents is limited. Only 18% of respondents had ever been to the Senior Center and many provided ideas for ways that social opportunities can be expanded or developed—all would require additional capacity in terms of space and staff. Overall, the majority of Swampscott respondents reported high levels of social connection. In addition, there is a strong willingness to help fellow residents with small tasks when needed—91% of survey respondents reported that they do provide neighbors with help or they would if they were asked. That said, there is a segment of the population that can be identified as prone to social isolation. For example, 18% of survey respondents report not having talked with a neighbor in the past month and 23% of respondents get together in person with friends or family once a month or less, and 17% were dissatisfied with opportunities to engage informally with neighbors. These findings illustrate an opportunity to strengthen social participation opportunities to reduce risk of isolation in later life. Based on these results, the following ideas for action are recommended:

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<sup>5</sup> [http://www.mapc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Final\\_Swampscottreport\\_1\\_17\\_13.pdf](http://www.mapc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Final_Swampscottreport_1_17_13.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.swampscottma.gov/town-administrator/pages/harbor-waterfront-plan-2018>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.cityofsanrafael.org/2-20-19-sidewalk-repair-program-see-live-updates-on-our-map/>



### **Ideas for Action in Swampscott: Social Participation**

- Initiate a Facebook page for older adults to share knowledge and resources as well as make requests and find peers with similar interests in attending events.
- Explore the possibility of increasing the number of active adult events such as bowling, wine tasting, or an indoor walking group.
- Consider strengthening intergenerational activities through the creation of a senior-student liaison who can make connections and share information about opportunities for intergenerational activity throughout the community (e.g., inviting older adults to attend Big Blue Band concerts etc.).
- Develop a “companion” program that connects residents who have a shared interests (e.g., museum visit, day trip, or walking). This type of connection can provide socialization, transportation, and recreation.
- Identify neighborhood-based programs or mechanisms to strengthen informal networks in neighborhoods and ensure that existing neighborhood-based activities are inclusive of older residents.
- Consider ways to welcome first-time participants to the Senior Center who are reluctant to participate on their own (e.g., a welcoming committee or a “buddy” program that encourages current users to bring a friend).
- Educate community organizations and faith communities about who to contact if they identify someone who may be at risk of social isolation.
- Develop an Age Friendly regional coalition to strategize about ways that area senior centers can work together to ensure that all older residents have access to the rich array of programs without duplication of effort. Explore the development of a “specialty senior center model”. For example, the Marblehead Senior Center could promote its exercise programs to residents of area communities, the Nahant Senior Center could do the same with its arts and cultural programs and the Swampscott Senior Center could also contribute through the promotion of its recreational programs and health clinics. Transportation and other resources could be shared.
- Consider how the various clubs in town (e.g., yacht, golf, rotary, garden) are connected to the COA and identify opportunities for co-hosting events or collaborating to reach a larger swatch of older residents.

### **Civic Engagement & Employment**

Most survey respondents were satisfied with volunteer opportunities and opportunities to get involved in local government (59%; and 64% respectively); but more than one third of respondents reported “I don’t know” about these two aspects of community living. This suggests a lack of awareness of opportunities for volunteer work or civic engagement. Considering ways that residents can be more easily made aware of these opportunities is a priority within this

domain. Not surprisingly, most residents under age 60 are still working full time while among those respondents over age 60, more than two-thirds are retired. A segment of Swampscott's older residents is looking for work and more are working part-time. This finding suggests the appetite for continued involvement in the workforce among older residents. Based on these results, the following ideas for action are recommended:

### **Ideas for Action in Swampscott: Civic Engagement & Employment**

- Designate a group of resident advocates who will consistently attend board and committee meetings to raise awareness of older adult issues.
- As more residents begin to retire, consider ways for them to get connected with volunteer opportunities and post-retirement work.
  - Consider hosting a “retirement fair” and invite residents who have recently turned 65 as well as business and local organizations seeking part time employees or volunteers.
  - Facilitate “retirement groups” where groups of residents can meet regularly to develop purpose, make connections, and work through challenges.
- Expand programming around retirement planning or finding a post-retirement job
- Continue providing opportunities for residents to volunteer and stay civically engaged in town activities. Assure that residents can easily identify the opportunities that already exist through the Town or other local organizations and groups.
- Develop an all ages civic academy<sup>8,9</sup> that focuses on educating residents about municipal processes and empowering residents to advocate on behalf of themselves and their peers.

### **Community Supports & Health Services**

Participants highlighted the strength of being in such close proximity to high-quality health services as an aspect of Swampscott that makes it an ideal place to age. However, the second most commonly cited concern about remaining in Swampscott over time was the idea of maintaining healthy and functional ability to remain living independently; and securing the necessary supports to do so affordably. Twenty-four percent of Swampscott residents have at least one disability. Almost half of survey respondents reported providing care to someone who was disabled, frail, or struggling with a physical or mental health condition; and among those under age 60, 67% reported that this was challenging for them to provide this care and meet their other responsibilities. Further, 49% of survey respondents reported that they did not know who to contact in Swampscott if they or someone in their family should need help accessing social

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<sup>8</sup> [http://www.wenhamma.gov/citizens\\_leadership\\_academy/](http://www.wenhamma.gov/citizens_leadership_academy/)

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.boston.gov/news/first-senior-civic-academy-cohort-graduates>

services, health services, or municipal services. These two stark findings highlight the importance of communication and outreach about existing community supports and health services---particularly to those providing care. Based on these results, the following ideas for action are recommended:

### **Ideas for Action in Swampscott: Community Supports & Health Services**

- Improve community knowledge about available services.
  - While broadening awareness overall, take special efforts to improve awareness and access to those who could benefit from services, especially those with participation limitations or who are providing care to someone.
  - Host a “crash course in caregiving” to provide families with necessary information about services and supports.
    - Create opportunities to connect the Greater Lynn Senior Services (GLSS) with family caregivers.
- Encourage a formal collaboration between the police, fire, and Swampscott Senior Center departments to identify “at risk” older adults in Swampscott. If possible, formulate a routine check-in with these residents to stay ahead of crisis-situations.
  - Consider requiring a home-visit before a resident can obtain a lock box or life alert from the Swampscott Fire Department as a way of screening for risk factors related to falls or isolation.
- Consider the necessary increase in staff and building capacity of the Swampscott Senior Center so that additional programming and services can be obtained by the growing population of older residents.
- Consider hosting a “Caregiver’s Night Out”.
  - Explore partnerships with volunteer groups to provide respite care during the event.
- Expand and develop dementia-friendly initiatives.
  - Improve public education about dementia, access to adult day programs, and businesses that are trained to interact with people with dementia may be considered.
  - Promote greater awareness of dementia in the community. Participate in state-wide and national events like “Purple Pew” or the Walk to End Alzheimer’s, offer a free memory screening in partnership with a healthcare professional, or raise awareness in the workplace by sponsoring a “Go casual for a cause” Friday.
  - Pilot test a memory café or consider providing transportation to a nearby memory café.

### Communication & Information

Nearly every aspect of an age friendly community relies on communication and information. This includes both information relayed to residents; but also the ability for organizations, departments and other stakeholder groups to communicate among each other. Local newspaper, word of mouth, and social media were the most commonly reported methods of obtaining information. While most participants have access to the internet, 21% of respondents age 80 and older do not. These findings highlight the necessity of a multi-media approach. When asked specifically about programs offered by the Swampscott Senior Center and other community supports and health services, large numbers of respondents indicated “I don’t know”. Although these individuals may not yet have a need for these programs and services—this finding makes clear the work to be done around education future generations of older adults and their families about the resources available them in support of aging in place. Based on these results, the following ideas for action are recommended:

#### **Ideas for Action in Swampscott: Communication & Information**

- Consider scheduling quarterly meetings of key employees who work for organizations that provide services to older adults, providing an avenue to share information. Consider it a human service networking event.
- Continue to disseminate information in multiple forms and provide print copies of important information in places other than the Senior Center and utilize local newspaper as a mechanism for getting information distributed. Consider a “senior sentiment” as an editorial column to engage older residents with relevant topics.
- Explore the possibility of having a centralized social calendar for events happening around Swampscott as a way of making residents aware of programs (e.g., library, Senior Center, recreation, church groups).
- Disseminate information about existing information channels in Town. Consider developing a “how to” guide that includes instructions on things like how to post something to the Town website, how to use the robo-call system, how to submit a letter to the editor.

### Respect & Social Inclusion

During the community forum and in focus group conversations, residents described the “small town feel” and inclusive nature of Swampscott that they valued so deeply. Although survey results indicate an unevenness in this experience. When asked if they have ever felt excluded, 17% of respondents said yes. The most common reasons for feeling this way included: income (34%), age (27%), and religion or cultural background (17%). Many respondents wrote in other reasons for feeling excluded and the most commonly reported reason was not being a Swampscott native---or in other words, feeling like an outsider in their own town. In addition,

more than 1 out of 4 survey respondents disagreed that local policymakers take into account the interests and concerns of older residents. Improving lines of communication and opportunities for advocacy could improve this public perception. Based on these results, the following ideas for action are recommended:

### **Ideas for Action: Respect & Social Inclusion**

- Designate a group of resident advocates who will consistently attend board and committee meetings to raise awareness of older adult issues.
- Review existing processes for collecting public input on planning and policy change to ensure that it is Age Friendly. For example, is transportation available for public meetings or are surveys made available in hard-copy as well as online.
- Consider accessibility of public events, including seating, restrooms and cost to ensure that all residents feel welcome and supported.
- Consider educating “front facing staff” of Town offices on how to communicate with people with memory impairment and ensure that all older residents are treated with respect.
- Swampscott for All Ages Committee may wish to embed themes of inclusion in their mission statement and consider opportunities to build a broad-based coalition to tackle the issue of inclusion, involving representatives from faith communities, disability organizations, the schools, the Senior Center and other organizations committed to working collaboratively on this issue.
- Consider accessibility issues when planning community events; this includes taking into account the cost of participation, which may be out of reach for those with economic challenges.
- Consider strategies to improve outreach to all residents, including residents of senior public housing, as a means of promoting awareness and inclusion.

### Priorities

Study findings point to many strengths of Swampscott that contribute to its livability, including the historic nature of the community, the walkable waterfront, and the proximity to Boston and surrounding communities like Lynn, Salem, Marblehead, and Nahant. Yet some aspects of Swampscott are regarded less positively. The cost of living and limited number of downsizing options are a concern for many study participants. Walkability of the town—including sidewalk quality, safety of intersections, and amenities like seating, lighting and restrooms impede older residents from fully engaging in the community. Some alternatives to driving exist in Swampscott, however transportation remains a challenge for some residents. Equally important, there appears to be a segment of the population that is isolated or at risk of isolation. By putting cross-departmental strategies in place to respond to emergency needs of those who are isolated

or might be at risk of isolation, the Town can work to prevent extreme isolation and the crises that often come along with that condition.

Communication crosses all domains addressed within this study. As such, one priority may be to improve communication about available resources. Many programs are available in Town but residents are either unaware of them or unable to access them. Another priority for the Swampscott for All Ages initiative may be to identify strategies to empower older adults living in Swampscott to remain civically engaged through advocacy and volunteer work. Although the residents of Swampscott have a wide range of interests in social and recreational activities--- there are not many places in town to gather communally to engage in these activities. The capacity of the existing buildings—library, senior center, and the Swampscott Recreation Department is limited. Many participants commented on the value that a community center space would add to the livability of the town for residents of all ages. In addition, many residents currently participate in activities in surrounding communities; and yet transportation and information about these resources is uneven. Given the close proximity to other communities and the goals of advancing Governor Baker’s Age Friendly State initiative, opportunities for a more age friendly region should be pursued in this geographic region.

It is worth highlighting that an age friendly community is also supportive and inclusive of people living with dementia and their families. Results from this project suggest that few additional resources that appear to be needed in support of a more Age Friendly Swampscott community. Many Swampscott residents provide care for a loved one, 25% of those caregivers are providing care to someone with dementia; and survey results show that this is challenging for many. It appears that many who provide care don’t know or don’t take advantage of the currently available services (e.g., social services, homemaking services). Exploring targeted strategies to reach these vulnerable populations is crucial. Not only can information about resources and programs be instrumental in facilitating quality of life for these residents and their caregivers; but increasing overall community knowledge about the experience of caregiving and living with dementia can erode stigma and make caregivers feel less isolated.

Many projects to improve livability in Swampscott are already underway and therefore, we suggest building on the momentum of projects already in place. The Swampscott for All Ages Committee and the Senior Center have an important role to play in listening to and advocating for the needs of Swampscott’s older residents.

# The Swampscott for All Ages Initiative

## Introduction

By the year 2030, 35% of Swampscott residents will be age 60 and older<sup>10</sup>. In response to this demographic shift as well as in response to the desire of most residents to remain living in their community, the resident leaders of Swampscott, with support of the Town, have embarked on the journey to become a more age friendly community. They call themselves the Swampscott for All Ages Steering Committee and Initiative. The Swampscott for All Ages initiative is indicative of how the community of Swampscott values resident contribution. Two dozen residents, with a range of backgrounds and expertise, volunteered to make the town more Age Friendly. This Swampscott for All Ages Committee is charged with ensuring that Swampscott is and remains an accessible and inclusive place in which to live, work and play. The purpose of the research described in this report is to inform Swampscott's effort to be an age friendly community for residents of all ages and abilities.

The Swampscott for All Ages initiative is structured around livability principles embedded in the Age Friendly Community framework, developed by the World Health Organization (WHO) and coordinated in the U.S. by AARP. The initiative, taking its first steps in 2016, is designed to intersect with and inform other ongoing efforts occurring in Swampscott.

The Swampscott approach is meant to include physical infrastructure as well as social and service environments as it seeks to strengthen livability for all ages and abilities, including residents with dementia and their families. Research conducted in Swampscott and discussed in this report is meant to support an understanding of the current livability of Swampscott and to identify gaps and disparities in livability features. The ultimate goal of the report is to identify priorities for action that may be taken up by the initiative in coming years.

## The Age Friendly Community Framework

Communities throughout the nation are pursuing new strategies to promote health and quality of life among their residents. Towns and cities are embarking on community-engaged initiatives meant to identify and improve local amenities and services that have a meaningful impact on resident well-being, based on WHO's "Age Friendly communities" framework, as well as related models such as "livable communities" or "lifelong communities."

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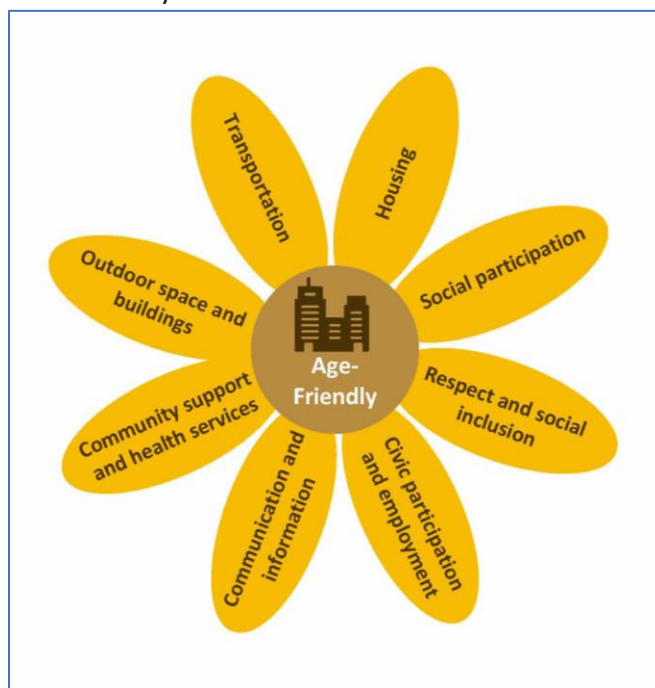
<sup>10</sup> Population projections are based on figures from the Donahue Institute. <http://www.donahue.umassp.edu/>

An “Age Friendly” Community, as described by WHO, is one in which people participate in activities, are connected to their neighbors, remain healthy and active, and feel they belong—no matter their age. Through planning, taking action, and evaluating progress, communities all over the world are taking steps to improve their social and physical environments as a strategy for promoting health and well-being throughout the life course. The Age Friendly framework describes focus areas for communities and lays out a process intended to ensure repeated consultation with the community, collective reflection, action and evaluation. WHO also hosts an Age Friendly Network, established in 2010 as a means of facilitating the exchange of information among communities. More than 50 cities and towns in Massachusetts have already joined the Age Friendly Network (<https://extranet.who.int/agefriendlyworld/who-network/>), and in his January 2018 State of the State speech, Governor Baker announced that Massachusetts joined the network of Age Friendly States, signaling broader commitment to the principles that support aging in community.

**Domains.** The Age Friendly framework includes eight domains of community life that intersect with livability, accessibility, and the ability to thrive within the community (see **Figure 1**). Within each domain, elements are identified that are relevant to affordability, appropriateness, and accessibility.

The description of Age Friendly features, and the experiences of communities throughout the world that are using the framework, make clear that each community will conceptualize this effort in a somewhat unique way. Local conceptualizations will shape the initiatives, programs, and partnerships put in place; they will also shape the research and measurement used in support of the effort. Ultimately, the first step involved in

**Figure 1.** Eight Domains of an Age Friendly Community



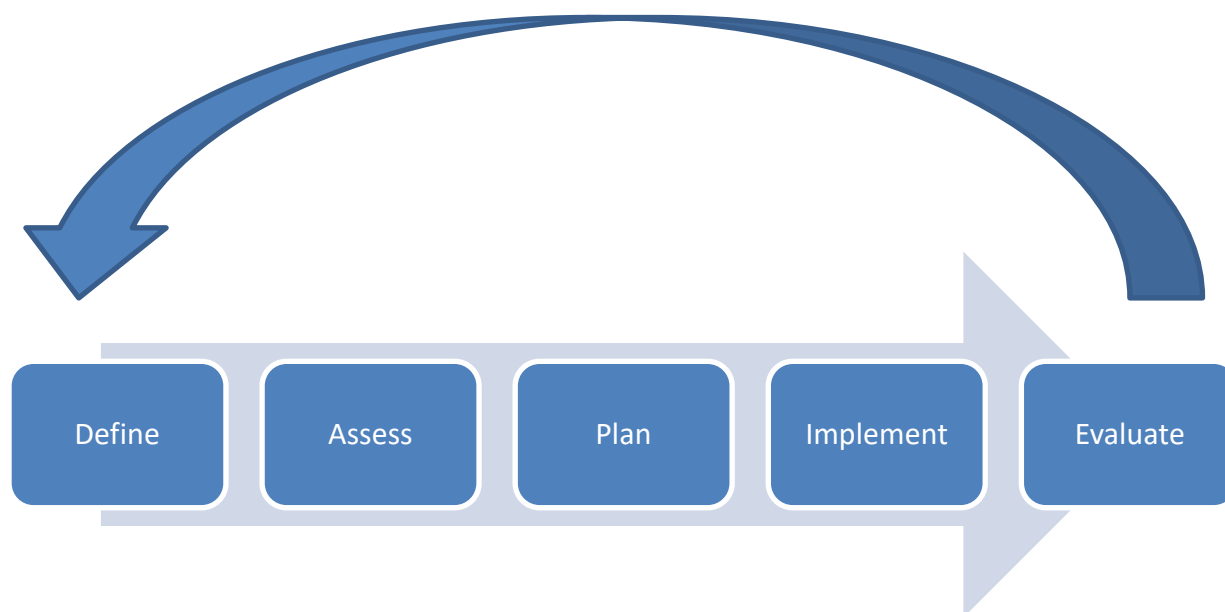
*Source: Adapted from WHO by S. Harris (Design for Aging Committee, BSA)*

pursuing an Age Friendly agenda is to define and assess environmental features relative to the characteristics and resources of residents actually living in the community. Based on what is learned in that initial step, a community will develop an Action Plan designed to address the most pressing or most actionable issues identified through the needs assessment process. In



subsequent years, as the Action Plan is implemented and evaluated, the broad goals of the Initiative may be modified in a continuous improvement cycle (see **Figure 2**). When working towards building an Age Friendly Community, it is helpful to keep in mind that not all domains must be addressed in a single cycle. A community may wish to select domains in which they are most prepared to make progress, or which are identified as priority areas by stakeholders.

**Figure 2.** Process for Developing an Age Friendly Community



Research in support of this report started with a community forum conducted in the Spring of 2018, during which residents offered initial information about the current livability of Swampscott as a place to grow old and their hopes for future improvements. Subsequent data collection included key-informant interviews with local leaders, a peer-community comparison, focus groups with community stakeholders, and a mailed survey of all residents age 55 and older.

### Methods

Community forum. In March 2018, a community-wide forum was conducted at the Swampscott High School with more than 100 residents in attendance. After a brief presentation by CSDRA researchers regarding the eight features of an age friendly community as defined by the WHO, attendees shared strengths and challenges to living in Swampscott. Comments were also received from forum participants both in writing and from individual conversations with research staff.

Key-informant interviews. Seven key-informant interviews were conducted during May 2018. Interviewees included: the Town Administrator, the Director of the Swampscott Senior Center,

the Chiefs of Police and Fire, the Director of the local YMCA, the Director of the local aging service access point (ASAP), and a member of the Swampscott Planning Board. These conversations focused on the features of an age friendly community, unmet needs among residents, and potential solutions to support a more livable Swampscott.

Peer Community Comparison. In order to harness the momentum of the age friendly community movement in the region, interviews were conducted with representatives from 4 surrounding communities: Nahant, Marblehead, Salem, and Lynn. This community comparison also allowed for a deeper understanding of regional assets and barriers to an age friendly Swampscott.

Resident Survey. A survey was developed by UMass Boston research staff in consultation with representatives of the Swampscott for All Ages initiative. In designing the survey, efforts were made to address elements of each domain within the framework being used by the initiative along with relevant demographic information. All residents of Swampscott age 55 and older were mailed a postcard to notify them of the survey process and one week later the survey was mailed. The survey was also made available online. All responses were kept confidential and data was entered and analyzed at UMass Boston. In total, 1,645 residents responded to the survey, including 290 completed online for a response rate of 33%. The age distribution of respondents is shown in **Table 1**. Survey respondents represent a slight over representation of residents age 60-69 and underrepresentation of those age 70-79. Thus, results of the survey should be interpreted with this in mind. In addition, a majority of respondents were female (59%) and 42% of respondents have lived in Swampscott for more than 35 years. Tables and figures of survey results are dispersed throughout this report and are included in detail (by age group) in **Appendix A**.

**Table 1. Age distribution of survey respondents compared to the American Community Survey**

	Survey Respondents	American Community Survey
55-59	14%	16%
60-69	38%	47%
70-79	32%	19%
80+	16%	18%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

\*Note that residents under age 55 are excluded from this comparison. Although individuals under age 55 were not prohibited from responding, only 90 did so. In addition, 86 respondents chose not to report their age. Tables and charts in this report include all individuals responding, including those under age 55.

Focus Groups. Four focus groups were held in June 2019, each including stakeholders and/or residents who were recruited by members of the Swampscott for All Ages committee. Two focus groups included 20 residents of Swampscott of a variety of ages and the other two included a total of 9 individuals representing faith communities, local government, small business representatives, and aging service provider agencies. Focus groups were held in locations convenient to participants and lasted for approximately one hour. Discussions were audio recorded and a note-taker was also present to ensure the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the group conversation.

## Results

In discussing results, findings are presented by domain starting with the features associated with the built environment (housing, transportation, and spaces and buildings), followed by domains involving the availability of appropriate services and supports, social participation, involvement in work and civic life, information access, and inclusiveness of the community. We note that, to a considerable extent, items discussed under domains overlap with one another. For example, inadequate knowledge within a community about local amenities – say, opportunities for recreation – represents a challenge under the participation domain, but also reflects shortfalls in the communication and information domain.

Our general approach in presenting findings based on the survey is to describe the patterns of response for respondents as a whole, and then break out findings based on relevant subgroups, and presented by age group. Within each domain, findings draw on all sources of information gathered for this study. In many cases, related observations emerged from multiple sources in our data collection – from interviews, focus groups, and survey responses, for example – and is presented in an integrated way. We make every effort to be clear about the source of the information but do not explicitly segment off information by source, as the goal is to emphasize common findings that emerge across sources. Text placed in italics and within callouts are respondent comments drawn from write-ins on the community survey.

Finally, we note that some important themes emerged from the study that do not strictly align with any specific domain. For example, the theme of financial security emerged throughout our research, intersecting with virtually all of the named domains. These cross-cutting themes are addressed initially in sidebars and developed further in the domains with which they connect.

## Housing and Economic Security

Efforts to identify and address challenges associated with housing have been underway in Swampscott for some time. The Swampscott Housing Production Plan completed in 2016 offers a comprehensive housing needs assessment, and includes commitments meant to increase availability of appropriate housing to support an aging population<sup>11</sup>. The town has established and funded the Swampscott Affordable Housing Trust, which supports affordable housing, and an increase in affordable units has occurred. For example, funding for the Senior Residences at the Machon was secured in July 2019; this project will include 38 units of affordable senior housing for the Town. This will add to the 212 units of subsidized housing in Swampscott.



Information gathered for this study focuses on two intersecting aspects of housing as it relates to livability in Swampscott. Housing affordability is discussed as a key barrier to livability in the community. As well, shortfalls in the availability of housing options are identified and discussed, including not just more affordable options but also opportunities that would facilitate residents' moving to a home that is better aligned with their evolving lifestyle while still remaining in Swampscott.

Data from the American Community Survey (ACS) highlight the distinctive markets represented by owner-occupied and renter-occupied housing in Swampscott. ACS data suggest that 81% of occupied homes in Swampscott are owned by the residents. As shown in **Table 2**, most owner-occupied homes in Swampscott are one-unit detached structures, while 20% of renter-occupied homes are in buildings with at least 10 units. More than half (56%) of homeowners are age 55+ and only 10% are aged 34 or younger. Similarly, 44% of renters in Swampscott are aged 55+ and 18% of renters are aged 34 or younger. As well, median household income is substantially higher among homeowners than among renters. However, the share of "cost burdened" householders is similar among homeowners and renters, at about 60%, indicating that costs may pose

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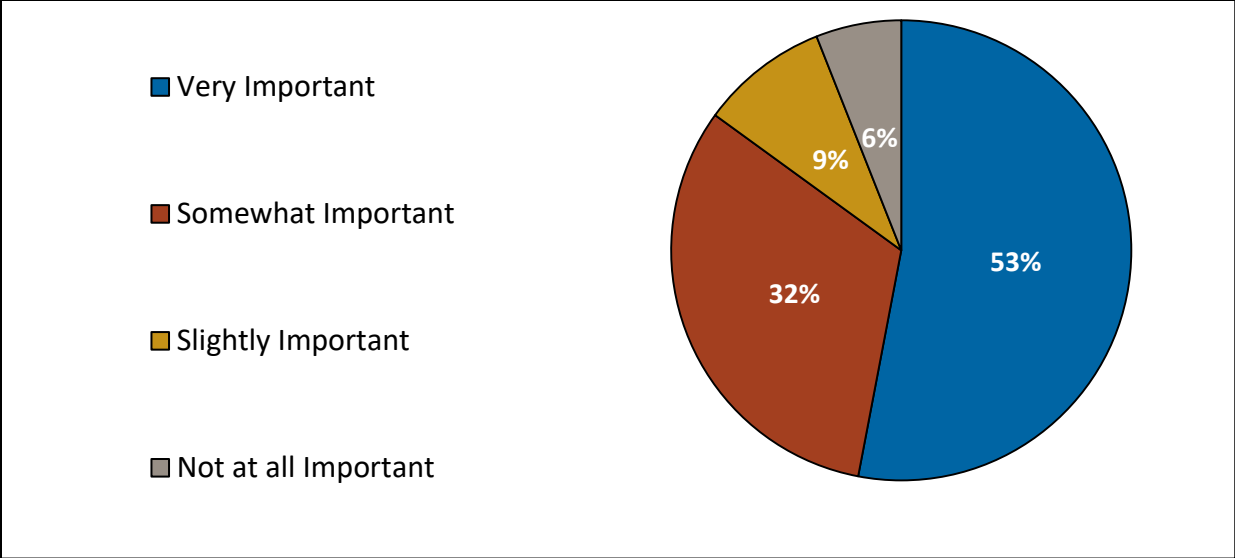
<sup>11</sup> See Housing Production Plan (2016) Goal #2: Provide seniors and persons with disabilities with greater housing options in Swampscott.

challenges for about two-thirds of households in Swampscott, impacting homeowners and renters alike.

<b>Table 2. Features of owner-occupied and renter-occupied homes in Swampscott (American Community Survey)</b>		
<b>Owner-occupied homes</b>		<b>Renter-occupied homes</b>
76% of owner-occupied homes are one-unit detached structures.	<b>Structure of housing</b>	20% of renter occupied homes are located in buildings with at least 10 units.
56% of homeowners are age 55+. 34% are age 35-54. 10% are under age 34.	<b>Age</b>	44% of renters are age 55+. 38% are age 35-54. 18% are under age 34.
Median household income is high among homeowners: \$144,070 (for homeowners with and without a mortgage).	<b>Income</b>	Median household income among renters is far lower than for homeowners, at \$46,162.
36% of homeowners with a mortgage and 32% of homeowners without a mortgage are “cost burdened” spending more than 30% of their income on housing (mortgage payments, property tax, home insurance, utilities).	<b>Cost burden</b>	61% of Swampscott renters are “cost burdened”, spending at least 30% of their income on housing (rent and utilities)
<u>Sources:</u> American Community Survey, 2013-2017, Tables S2506, S2503, S2504 & S2507. Statistics are based on 5-year survey estimates.		

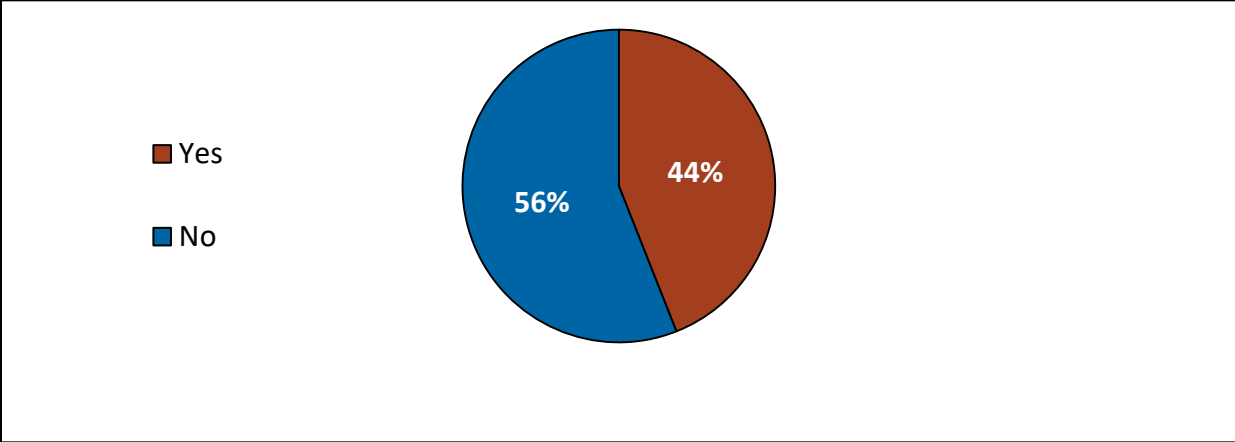
Respondents were asked how important it is to them to remain living in Swampscott as they get older. More than half of respondents reported that it was very important to them to remain in Swampscott (see **Figure 3**). However, 15% of respondents indicated that remaining in Swampscott was only slightly important or not at all important.

**Figure 3. How important is it for you to remain living in Swampscott as you age?**



Understanding the housing stock in Swampscott is important when assessing the age-friendliness of the community. Survey respondents were asked about their current place of residence. A majority (68%) of the Swampscott for All Ages community survey respondents reported living in a single-family home and 86% of respondents reported owning their current place of residence. Further, more than 1 in 5 (23%) of survey respondents reported living alone---and these rates were higher among respondents age 70-79 (29%) and 80 and older (44%). In addition, more than half of survey respondents (56%) report that their current residence does not have a bathroom and bedroom on the first floor (see **Figure 4**), which can present challenges in mobility and independence related to daily living needs.

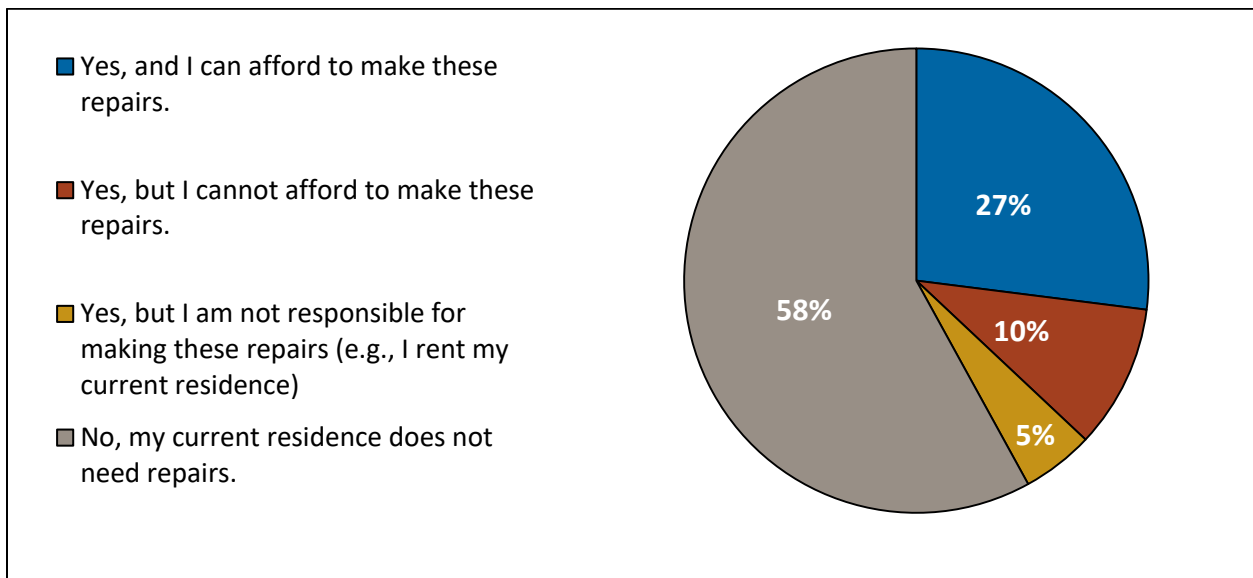
**Figure 4. Does your current residence have a bathroom and full bath on the first floor?**



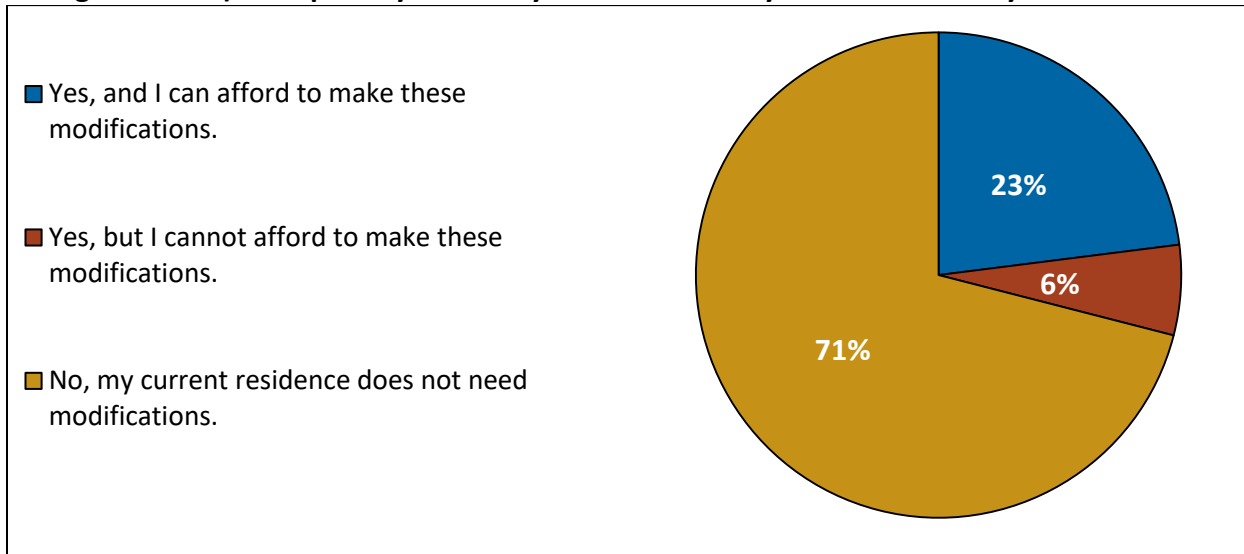
Further, survey respondents reported the level to which their current homes need repairs or modifications to maintain them as safe places to live. **Figures 5 and 6** illustrate that 42% of respondents have homes that would require some repairs in order to make them “age friendly”.

Of that group, only 10% report not being able to afford these repairs. Similarly, 29% report needing to modify their homes for the future and only 6% report not being able to afford to make these changes. Maintaining a home requires resources—including people who can make the repairs or modifications and the finances to pay for this work. Consequences of these challenges to maintenance and repair may lead to unsafe living conditions, isolation, loss of independence, and potentially involuntary relocation.

**Figure 5. “Does your current residence need home repairs (e.g., new roof, electrical work, etc.) to improve your ability to live in it safely for the next five years?”**

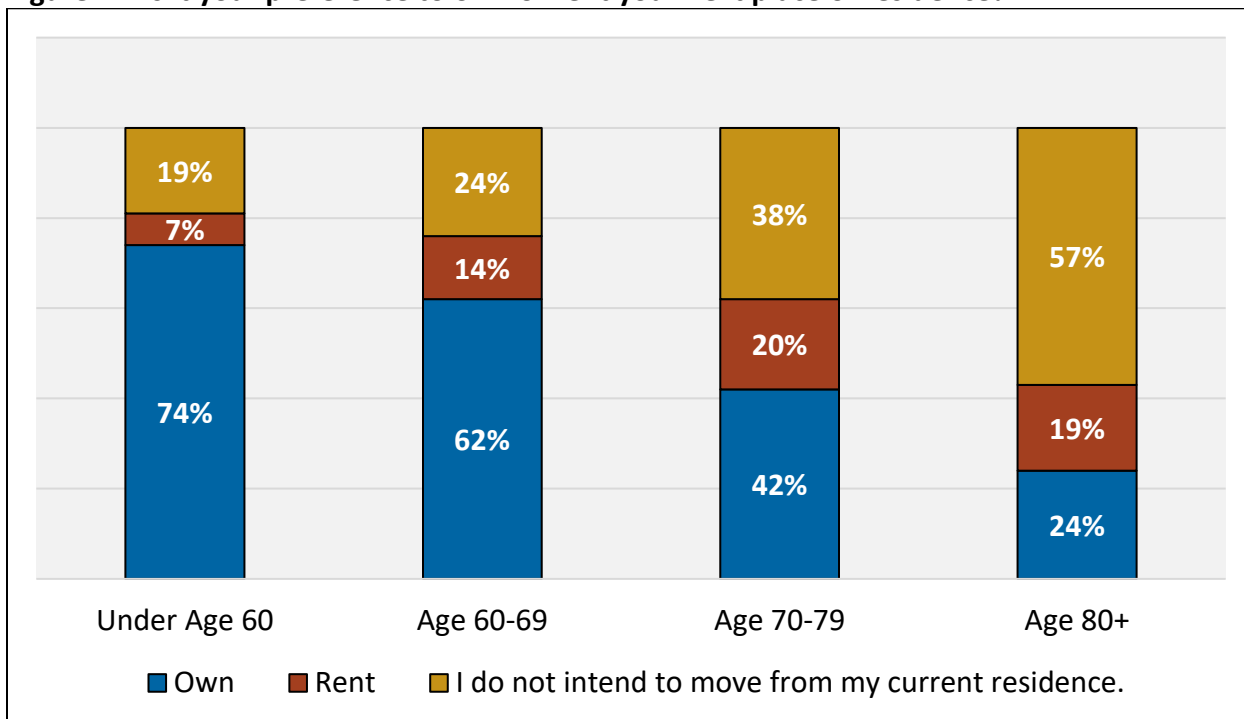


**Figure 6. “Does your current residence need home modifications (e.g., grab bars in showers or railings on stairs) to improve your ability to live in it safely for the next five years?”**



When asked about preferences for future housing, two key findings to note: 1) most people prefer to own their next residence; and 2) a sizeable share of Swampscott’s older residents do not intend to move from their current residence (see **Figure 7**). Taken together, these survey results suggest that Swampscott’s older residents are committed to continuing to age in Swampscott.

**Figure 7. “Is it your preference to own or rent your next place of residence?”**





In focus groups and interviews, Town leaders and residents observed that there are a host of consequences to the lack of affordable senior housing currently being faced by older residents of Swampscott. This concept of being “house poor” was used to describe older Swampscott residents who no longer had a mortgage and could pay for the property taxes and utilities but not a whole lot more than that. This type of constraint can lead to social isolation, neglecting healthcare needs, and overall decline to the quality of the property. Further, some focus group participants pointed out that it is not possible to find housing in Swampscott that costs less than the current property tax bill on a single-family home—pointing to the fact that most recently developed housing has been market-rate which is not considered affordable to the average Swampscott resident, let alone an older adult with a fixed income. As one focus group participant who works in social services described, the results of this conundrum include a town that has some gorgeous houses that are awful inside. This individual commented that “no one knows what is going on here”.

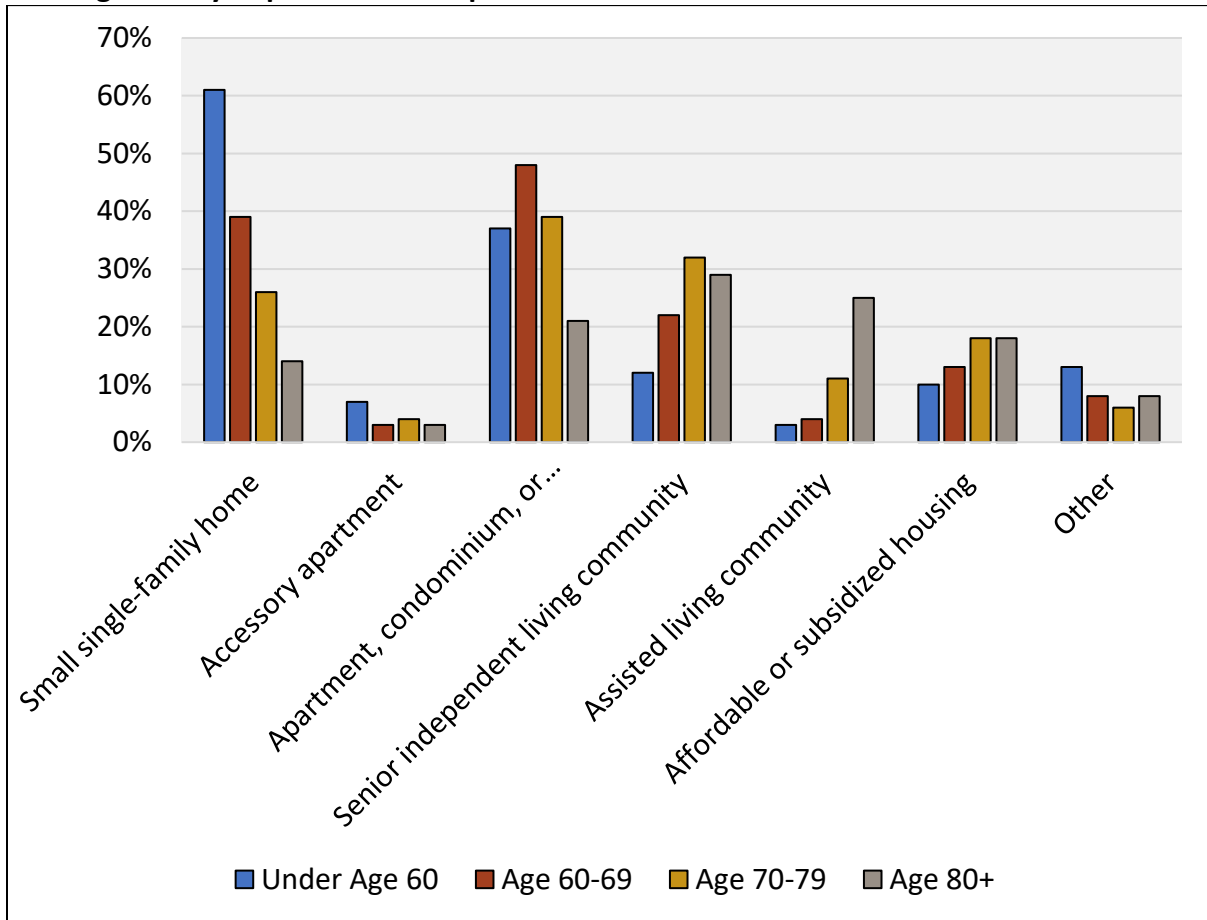
Survey participants were asked the type of housing they would prefer if a change required moving from their current residence. Responses varied by age group. More than two-thirds of the respondents under age 60 chose a single-family home compared to other options, whereas those age 60-79 preferred apartments, condos, or townhomes and those survey respondents age 80 and older most preferred to be in a senior independent living community (see **Figure 8**). Among the write-in responses to the “other” answer option, most respondents reported that if they needed to move—they would not stay in Swampscott due to the costs of housing and lack of supportive, age-appropriate housing. The reported alternative would be to move to other communities in Massachusetts or potentially another state to be closer to family.

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*Not able to afford to (downsize).  
When I get to a point, when I need  
assistance, I will not be able to  
afford living in my beautiful town.*

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**Figure 8. “In the next 5 years, if you needed to move from your current home, what kind of housing would you prefer in Swampscott?”**

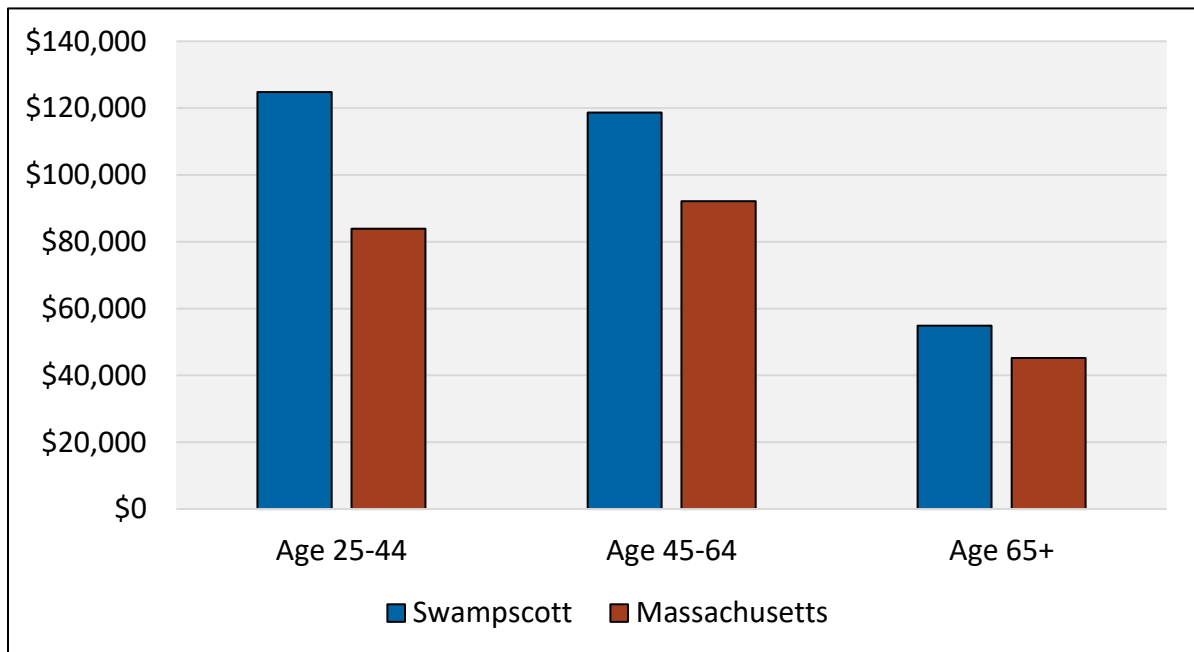


### Housing & Economic Security

Information gathered for this study suggests that many housing challenges in Swampscott relate to the cost of housing in general, and property taxes in particular. Discussion of affordability arose routinely in focus groups and interviews, with one person commenting, “the number one and biggest concern in this town is the very high tax rate on my property taxes”. Focus group participants spoke about the high cost of housing in Swampscott and the lack of affordable options, particularly for older residents.

On average Swampscott residents report relatively high income, but segments of the community struggle financially. Estimates from the ACS place median household income in Swampscott at \$105,169 in 2017 dollars, well above comparisons for Massachusetts as a whole. Across each age group, typical household income in Swampscott is higher than in Massachusetts overall (see **Figure 9**).

**Figure 9. Median household income by age of householder (2017 dollars)**

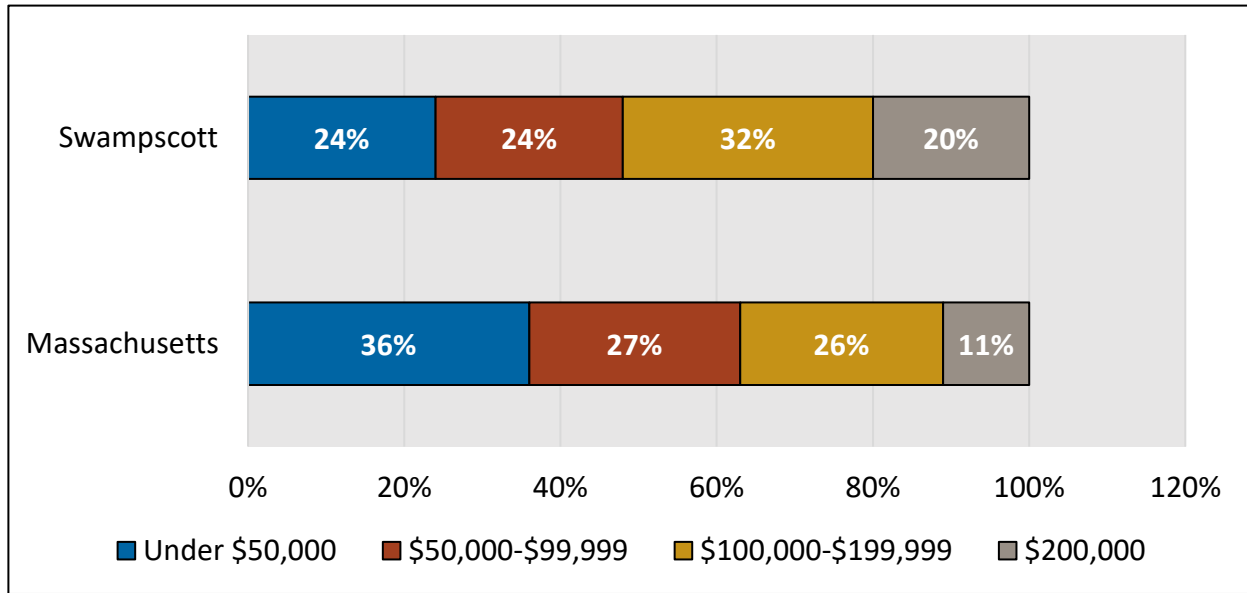


*Source: American Community Survey (2013-2017), Table B19049*

With respect to household income, there is some comparative disadvantage of some older residents in Swampscott (see **Figure 9**). Among householders 65 and older, the median income is \$54,871, which is higher than the statewide median for this age group (\$45,193) but much lower than the median income of younger Swampscott householders. These figures suggest that a sizeable number of residents are at risk of economic insecurity.

More than half of Swampscott households report incomes of \$100,000 or more (see **Figure 10**), compared to 37% of households in Massachusetts overall, yet 24% of Swampscott’s residents report incomes below \$50,000. Given the cost of living in Swampscott, especially associated with housing costs, it is likely that many people who would feel financially secure in other locations feel financially stretched in Swampscott.

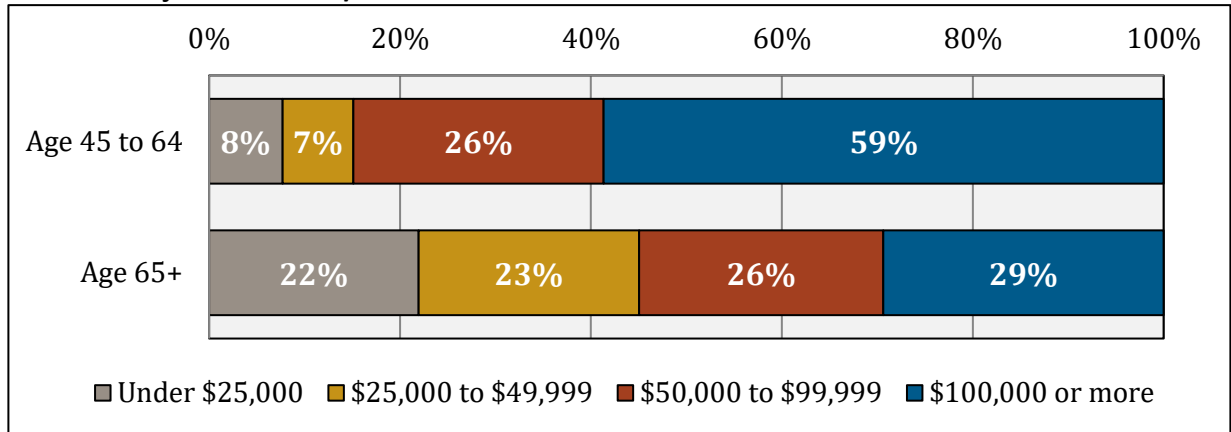
**Figure 10. Household income distribution (2017 dollars)**



Source: American Community Survey, 2013-2017, Table S19001. Statistics are based on 5-year survey estimates.

The economic profile of older Swampscott residents relative to younger residents is further illustrated in **Figure 11**, which shows that the older adult population lives on a modest income. About 29% of Swampscott residents age 65 and older report annual household incomes of \$100,000 or more. By comparison, 59% of households headed by younger residents report this level of income. Nevertheless, a large share of households headed by someone age 65 and older report annual incomes under \$25,000 (22%). This compares with just 8% of households headed by individuals age 45 to 64 having incomes under \$25,000. Thus, there is a sizeable segment of Swampscott’s older population that is at risk of financial insecurity or economic disadvantage.

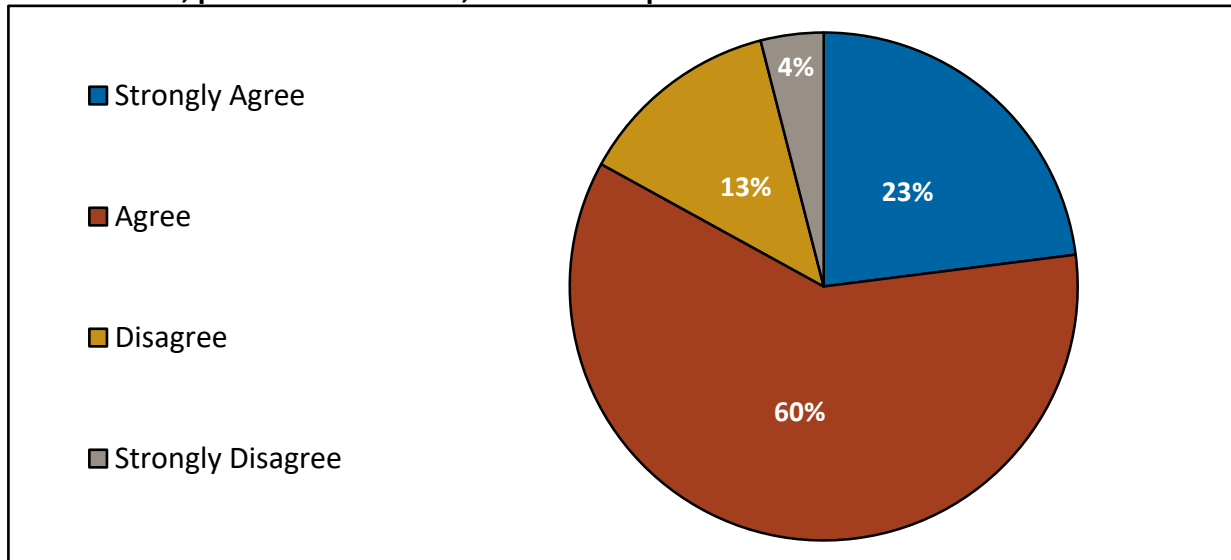
**Figure 11. Household income distribution in Swampscott by age of householder (in 2017 inflation-adjusted dollars)**



Source: Source: American Community Survey, 2013-2017, Table B19037. Numbers are calculated from 5-year survey estimates. Note: Includes only community households, not group quarters such as nursing homes.

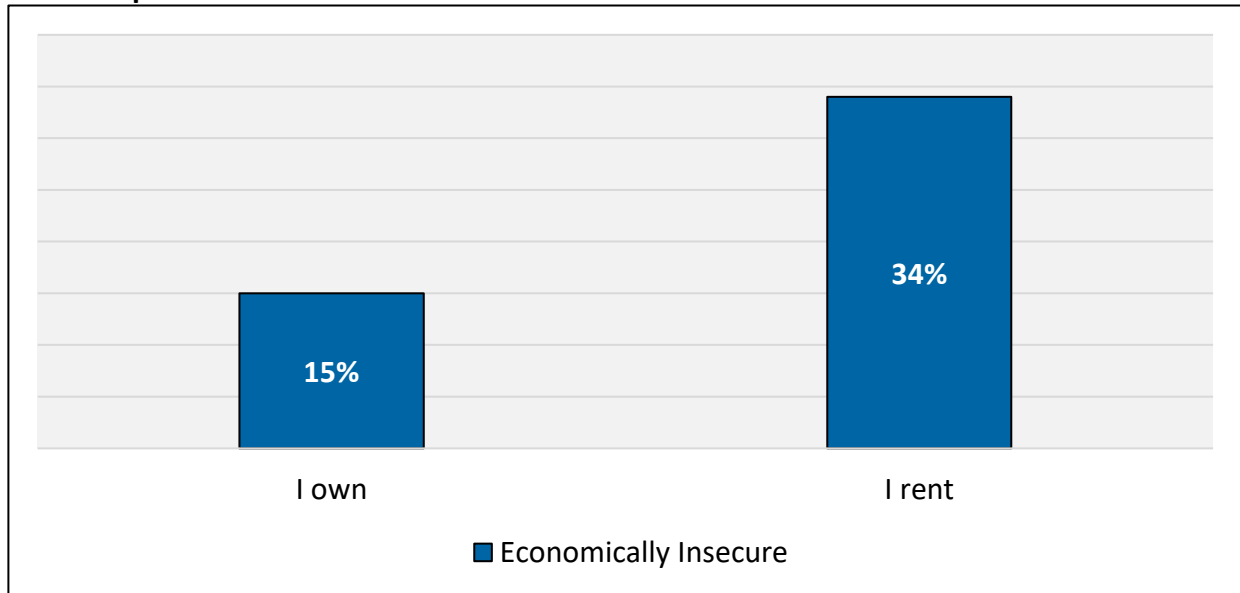
The community survey conducted for this project sought to capture the number of respondents who were financially insecure, painting a landscape of financial security in Swampscott, using the following question: “Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statement: ‘I have adequate resources to meet my financial needs, including home maintenance, personal healthcare, and other expenses.’” As shown by **Figure 12**, 17% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. These responses highlight that segments of the older adult population struggle financially.

**Figure 12. “I have adequate resources to meet my financial needs, including home maintenance, personal healthcare, and other expenses.”**



**Figure 13** shows the share of respondents who are struggling financially based on their homeownership status. Notably, 34% of renters are economically insecure, as indicated by responding that they disagree or strongly disagree with the statement, “I have adequate resources to meet my financial needs, including home maintenance, personal healthcare, and other expenses”.

**Figure 13. Percentage of participants who reported economic insecurity, by home ownership status**



Respondents indicated their biggest concerns for being able to stay in Swampscott as they get older. The cost of living, particularly the cost of housing and associated taxes, was the most commonly reported concern (see **Table 3**)<sup>12</sup>.

<b>Table 3. Cost of living as a concern in Swampscott</b>
<i>Taxes on real estate will force me from my community</i>
<i>Taxes if we stay in our home.</i>
<i>No affordable options if we can no longer garden, shovel, rake, etc.</i>
<i>I may need to have a home that has a bedroom &amp; bathroom on the 1st floor and my home would not sell for enough to buy one.</i>
<i>Our current home (which we own) is no longer meeting our needs as a family but we cannot afford to buy a new house in Swampscott - home prices are no longer affordable.</i>
<i>Housing affordability - not sure I can continue to pay mortgage &amp; taxes when retired.</i>
<i>Fairly close to a tipping point—if we lose more commercial properties... would increase the residential rate</i>

<sup>12</sup> Beyond housing and living expenses, other survey participants wrote in about their other concerns. Mainly, these included the physical accessibility of Swampscott (quality of roads, walkability and access to amenities), a sense that Swampscott was being overdeveloped, and overall worry about abilities to maintain homes.

## Ideas for Action in Swampscott: Housing & Economic Security

- Consider opportunities to reduce property taxes for those struggling to meet their needs. For example:
  - Freeze property taxes for those age 70 and older.
  - Expand access to existing property tax relief programs by raising the income limit for the tax work-off program.
  - Ensure that those who are already eligible for existing programs are aware of how to apply. Identify and communicate trusted resources for in-home supports (both home care and handyman services).
- Investigate strategies for developing a “village” in Swampscott. This model is an opportunity for older residents to come together to share resources for services and increase social interaction.
  - Resource sharing may include transportation, meals, and errands.
- Promote home repair and modification so that current housing is appropriate as people age.
- Increase opportunity for public discourse around affordable senior housing.
- Continue to promote the recently amended requirement for accessory-dwelling units so that interested residents take up this opportunity.
- Develop mechanisms by which residents who remain living in single-family homes as they age remain connected to the community (e.g., via the senior center) in order to prevent social isolation and other types of crises.
  - Consider targeting through mailings to homeowners of particular age groups educational materials about available opportunities and resources.
- Review current zoning regulations to identify opportunities to create more alternative housing options in Swampscott. For example, allowing congregate living of multiple older adults in existing large single-family homes.
- Increase community connections to senior housing developments in Swampscott.

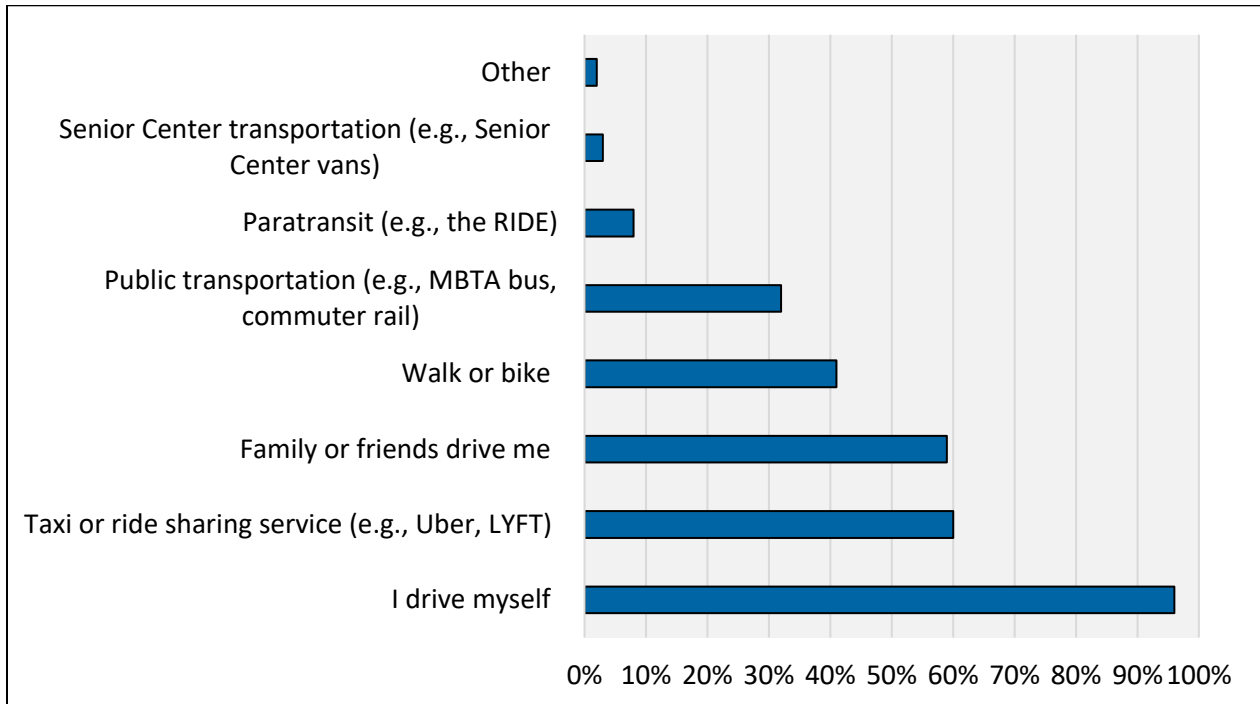
## Transportation

Although Swampscott is characteristically suburban, it is a small town, and necessary destinations such as grocery stores and medical providers are subsequently typically located beyond Town boundaries in surrounding communities, including



the cities of Lynn and Boston. As a result of its proximity to Boston, some public transit does exist in Swampscott including the MBTA commuter rail and bus service (including to nearby Wonderland Station on the Blue Line). Despite these options, many Swampscott residents, including 96% of survey respondents, drive themselves as a primary way of getting around. Other modes of transportation are shown in **Figure 14**. Overall, most (64%) survey respondents were satisfied with the transportation options in Swampscott (see **Appendix A**).

**Figure 14. “I use the following methods of transportation to meet my transportation needs (Check all that apply).”**



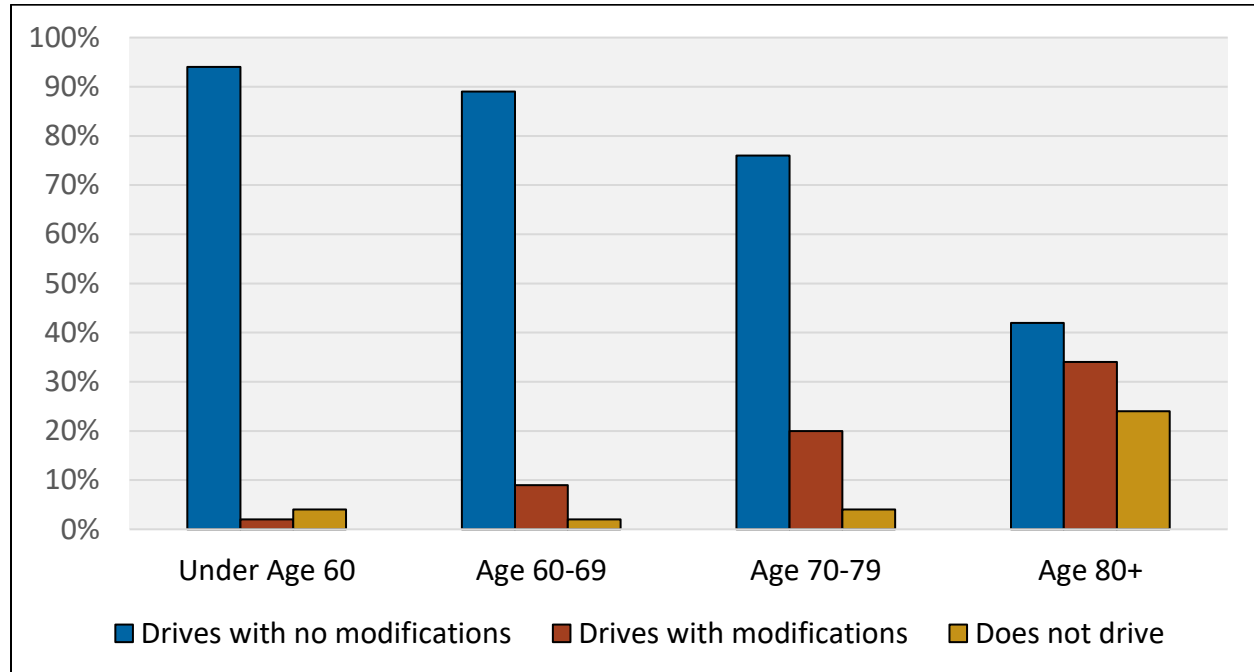
Respondents were asked if they had a condition that limits their ability to participate in the community as they wish. Among those survey respondents reporting a condition that limits their community participation, 43% report using the paratransit services in Swampscott, 35% report using the senior center transportation options, and 86% report that family or friends drive them where they need to go. These results, compared to the survey sample as a whole, indicate that supportive transportation options in Swampscott provide key mechanisms for community participation among those with physical limitations.

In addition, transportation options matter most when residents no longer drive themselves. **Figure 15** shows that small portions of respondents under age 80 do not drive, but 24% of respondents age 80 and older are no longer driving themselves. Further, 20% of respondents age 70-79 and 34% of those age 80 and older drive with some modifications (e.g., don't drive at night,



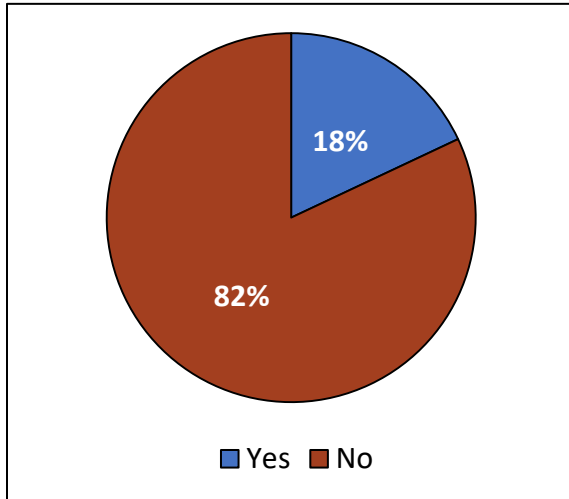
avoid driving in bad weather, only drive in familiar areas) suggesting that sizeable share would benefit from convenient and reliable transportation options.

**Figure 15. “Which of the following best describes your current driving status”, by age**



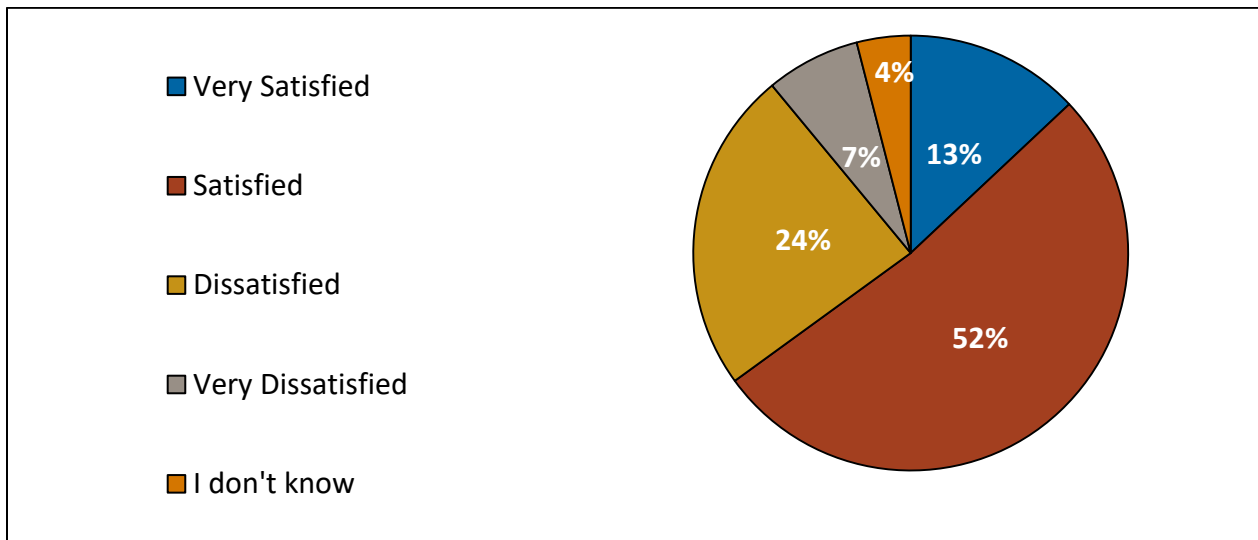
Transportation barriers can limit an individual’s access to obtaining necessary services such as medical care. Respondents were asked if within the previous 12 months they had missed, cancelled or rescheduled a medical appointment because of a lack of transportation. Among all respondents, only 4% reported this experience but among respondents age 80 and older, 7% have experienced this barrier to medical care (see **Appendix A**). However, among those respondents reporting a condition that limits their community participation, 18% have had his experience with disruption to obtaining medical care (see **Figure 16**).

**Figure 16. “Within the past 12 months, did you have to miss, cancel, or reschedule a medical appointment because of a lack of transportation?”, by physical limitation status**



The survey conducted for this study asked about issues relating to local travel, including satisfaction with parking. Although a majority of respondents (65%) indicated that they were satisfied or very satisfied with parking availability, 31% are dissatisfied—indicating that parking is a challenge for nearly one-third of respondents (see **Figure 17**). Narrow streets with on-street parking present navigational challenges both for older drivers but also pedestrians.

**Figure 17. Satisfaction with parking in Swampscott**



Transportation options for older residents and residents with disability

A priority of the Swampscott for All Ages initiative is supporting access to nearby services and supports, especially for those who are unable to drive or need transportation supports. Inadequate transportation can lead to isolation, decreased autonomy, and depression. Several transportation options exist in Swampscott for older adults. The Swampscott Senior Center provides rides to and from the Senior Center for the lunch program for Swampscott residents. Transportation for grocery shopping and transportation to medical appointments is available multiple times per week. In addition the MBTA paratransit service, the RIDE, is available to eligible Swampscott residents.

Focus group participants and interviewees described limitations of local transportation for those residents that are living with physical or cognitive limitations. To identify people who may

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*As I get older, I would like to take the train into Boston more often but cannot find parking at [the] station.*

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*Town offers many activities but difficult to access if you don't drive.*

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benefit from some level of accommodation based on health or disability, the following survey question was asked, “How much are your daily activities limited by your health or health-related problems?”. Ten percent of respondents reported experiencing limitations often or all of the time.

This has implications for accessing transportation (e.g., walking to a bus stop or navigating public transportation).

### Walking in Swampscott

The challenge of “getting around” was mentioned in forums, during interviews, and at all focus groups. Key concerns among participants focused on the barriers to walkability in Swampscott and the traffic. As a densely populated community nestled in between the City of Lynn, with access to Boston and Salem and among other seaside communities like Marblehead and Nahant, Swampscott is close to a lot but not accessible to much.

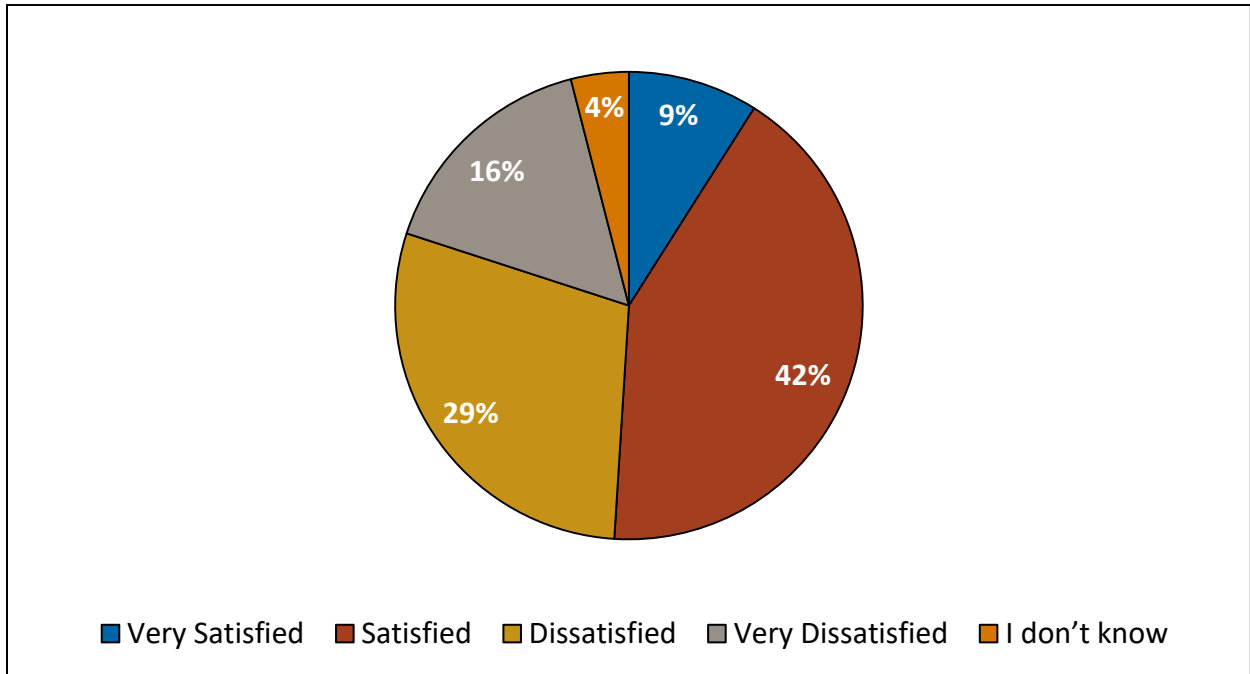
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*The lack of walkability is discouraging. Even if things are walking-distance I often have to drive. The sidewalks are crumbling, non-existent or being torn up by roots. I end up pushing a stroller in the street all the time and it's very unsafe.*

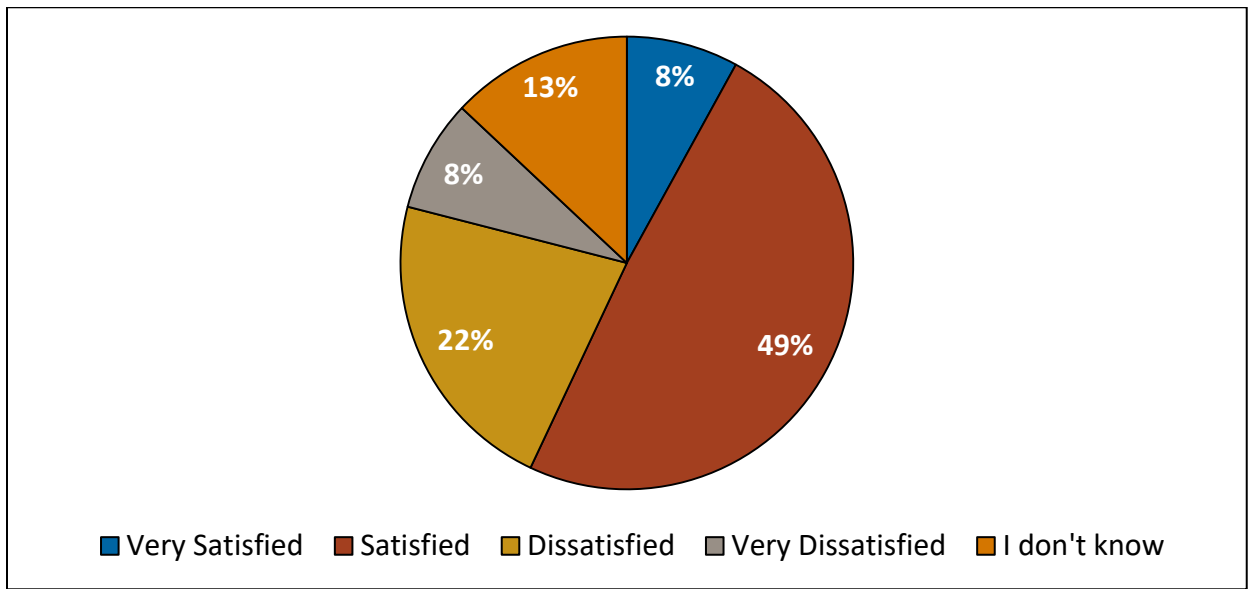
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**Figure 18** shows that 45% of survey respondents are dissatisfied with the availability of maintained sidewalks. Things like uneven surfaces, large cracks or tree roots can create hazards for pedestrians. Similarly, 30% of survey respondents are dissatisfied with lighting on sidewalks and 19% are dissatisfied with timing of traffic lights and marked crosswalks (see **Figures 19 and 20**). Fear of falling can prohibit older people from walking—which has negative consequences both for their health and their ability to access local amenities without driving.

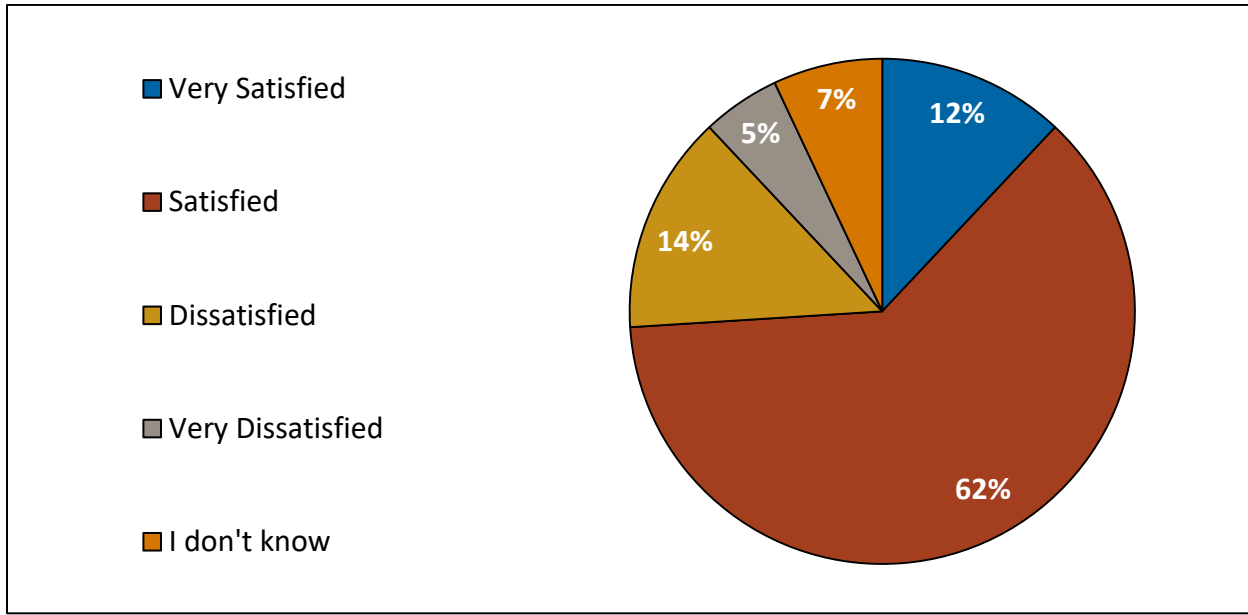
**Figure 18. Satisfaction with availability of maintained sidewalks**



**Figure 19. Satisfaction with lighting along sidewalks and cycle paths**



**Figure 20. Satisfaction with timing of traffic lights and marked crosswalks**



Ideas for Action in Swampscott: Transportation & Walkability

- Expand options for medical transportation.
  - Consider the use of volunteer drivers through developing a FISH program or TRIP program<sup>13</sup> and include the transport of caregivers or visitors in these programs.
- Conduct a feasibility study or procure funds for pilot-testing a local shuttle in Swampscott.
  - Consider partnerships with Marblehead, Nahant in this effort.
- Consider ways to make commuter rail access less expensive for older adults.
- Review bus stops in Swampscott to ensure they have benches, shelters, and flat pathways for access.
- Make ride share services more Age Friendly, considering ease of use, trust issues, and accessibility of vehicles.
  - Consider profiling local Uber/Lyft drivers so that residents are more familiar with local drivers.
  - Host workshops on ride-sharing “apps” at the public library.

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*Several times I have needed an escort to take me home after dental work or an outpatient operation. I've had to pay a healthcare professional from an agency. I'd volunteer to do this for other people if I weren't concerned about insurance.*

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<sup>13</sup><https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2017/10/10/Profiles%20of%20successful%20volunteer%20driver%20programs.pdf>

- Explore Go-Go Grandparent, a ride-sharing service for older adults<sup>14</sup>.
- To inform Swampscott’s “Complete Streets” initiative<sup>15</sup>, convene a walking group that identifies barriers to access outdoor spaces.
  - Look for dangerous intersections, connectivity challenges, tree interference, sidewalk disrepair, etc.
- Work with neighboring communities to develop multi-town transportation solutions. See other regional transportation authorities for examples<sup>16</sup>. Include transportation stops at senior centers of participating communities.

## Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

Swampscott prides itself on its beauty, beaches, and greenspaces. In fact, when asked about what they value most about living in Swampscott, comments about the outdoor spaces (specifically, the proximity to the ocean) were the most frequently mentioned (see **Table 4**).



<sup>14</sup> [https://gogograndparent.com/gogostart?gclid=Cj0KCCQjwrrXtBRCKARIsAMbU6bF-TxHXG18UZ4uG6sR4Yy35dcQAVIruQLT2cAxc3XJ85mFIWSt92McaApF-EALw\\_wcB](https://gogograndparent.com/gogostart?gclid=Cj0KCCQjwrrXtBRCKARIsAMbU6bF-TxHXG18UZ4uG6sR4Yy35dcQAVIruQLT2cAxc3XJ85mFIWSt92McaApF-EALw_wcB)

<sup>15</sup> [http://www.swampscottma.gov/sites/swampscottma/files/uploads/swampscott\\_complete\\_streets\\_policy\\_development.pdf](http://www.swampscottma.gov/sites/swampscottma/files/uploads/swampscott_complete_streets_policy_development.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.gatra.org/index.php/tri-town-connector/>

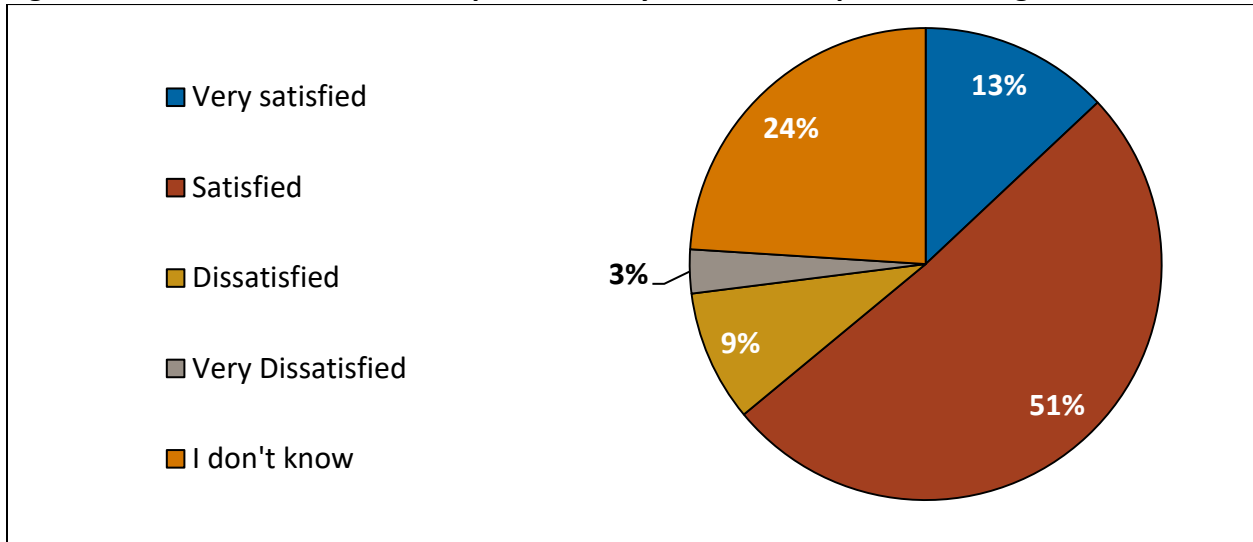
**Table 4. Survey respondents identified the natural beauty of Swampscott and proximity to other cities and towns as valued signature features.**

<i>Wonderful seaside community. Small, friendly. Close to Boston.</i>
<i>Beautiful Phillips Beach, well-kept downtown area, proximity to Boston, lovely neighborhoods.</i>
<i>The proximity to the ocean and to other historic North Shore towns</i>
<i>The small-town feel, although only being 12 miles north of a major city.</i>

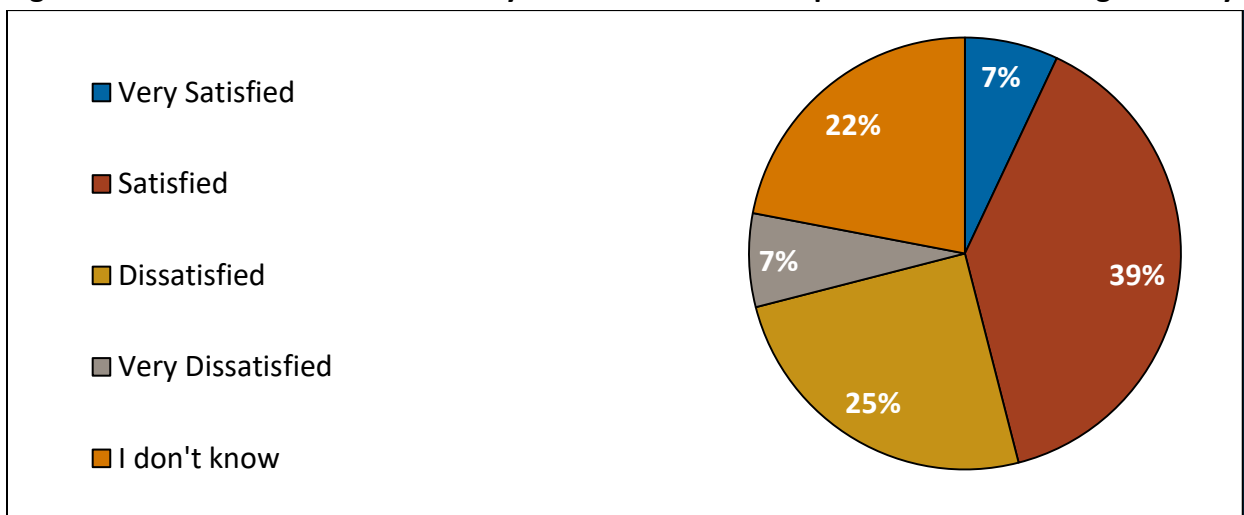
A seven year (2013-2020) plan for improvements to outdoor spaces and recreation was completed in 2013. Within this report, there were several objectives that would directly improve outdoor spaces in Swampscott for older residents. For example, some of these objectives include examining ways to include recreation needs for residents age 60 and older, incorporating age-appropriate elements to open spaces and recreation areas, and, in order to promote public access and awareness, generating signage and wayfinding as well as overall handicap accessibility of Windsor Park and adding rest areas in Jackson Park. For a community that is only 3 square miles, Swampscott has clearly made it a priority to maximize access to its local beauty. In addition, an ambitious plan for updates to the waterfront was published in 2018. This plan includes a seasonal local trolley that would connect residents with the beaches and the commuter rail station as well as public bathrooms near the beaches. Discussion under this domain includes a description of public buildings, open spaces, and accessibility challenges encountered by Swampscott’s older residents.

One factor that can shape access to community amenities is handicap accessibility. Ramps, curb cuts and other features meant to promote access among those who use wheelchairs or walkers benefit anyone with mobility limitations, as well as people with children in strollers. **Figure 21** indicates that most survey respondents (64%) are satisfied with the handicap accessibility of businesses, buildings and sidewalks in Swampscott—and 12% report dissatisfaction. In contrast, 32% of survey respondents are dissatisfied with the availability of shaded seating in public spaces (see **Figure 22**). Benches placed in strategically located areas can support walkability and promote access to public spaces, including shopping districts, public parks, and other community amenities. Shaded areas are key design features for creating age friendly outdoor spaces, reducing risk of overheating and promoting public access. Many public buildings in Swampscott are quite old, and some may require expansion or updating to promote livability. According to participants of this study, the local Post Office in Swampscott is not currently accessible.

**Figure 21. Satisfaction with handicap accessibility of sidewalks, public buildings, and businesses**



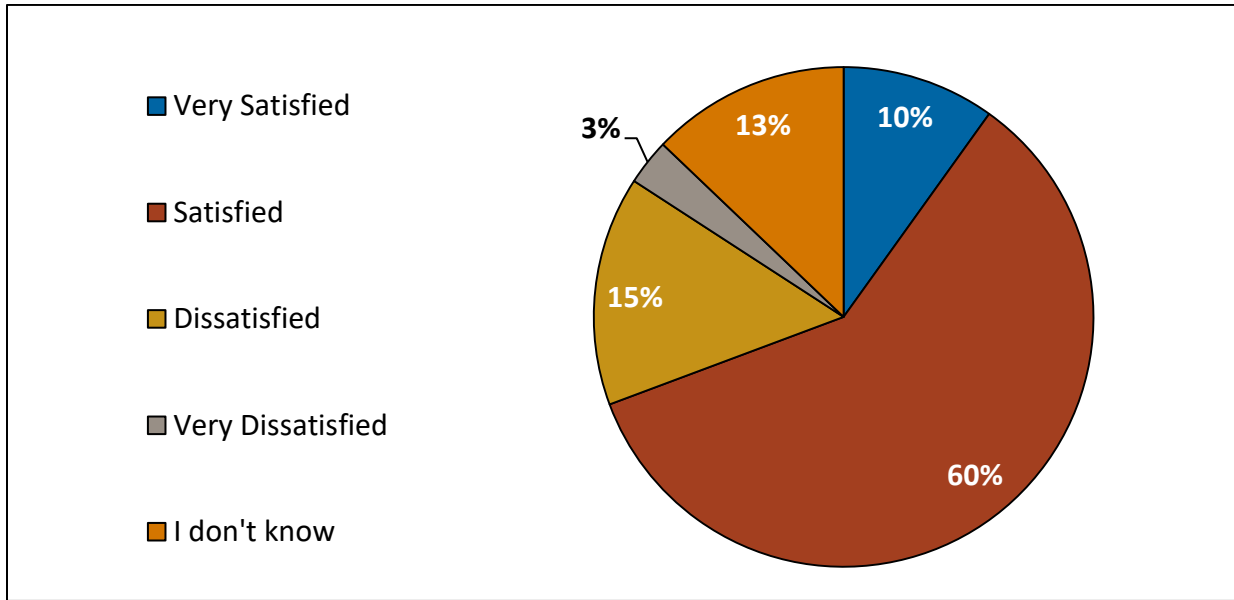
**Figure 22. Satisfaction with availability of shaded benches in public areas and along walkways**



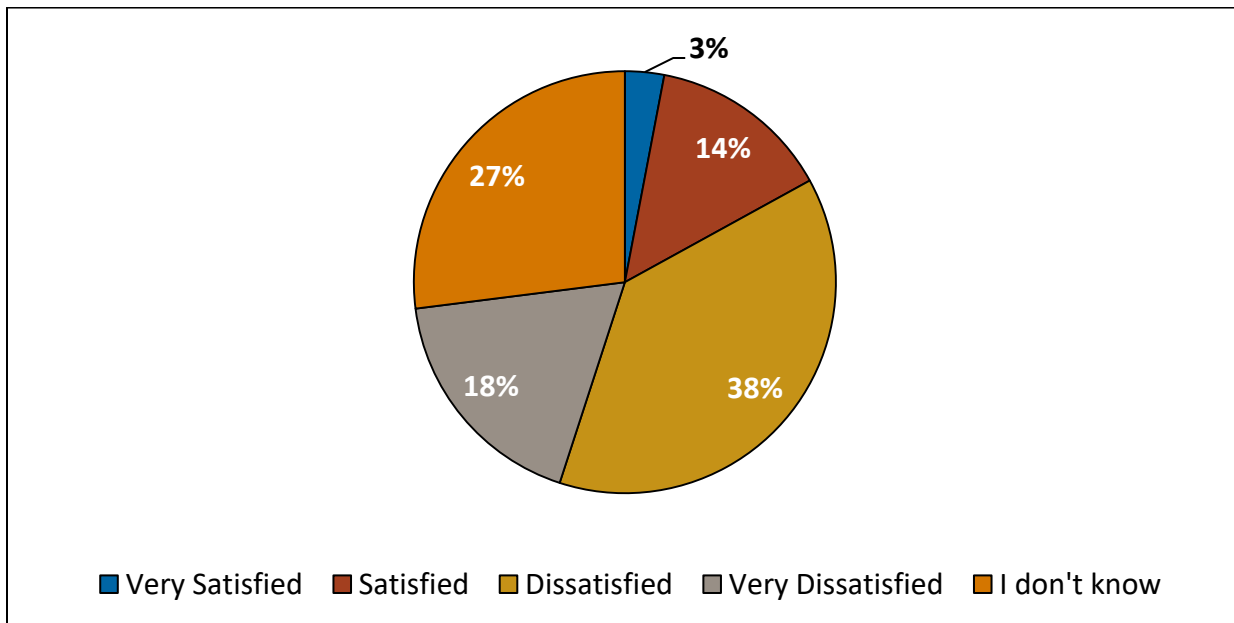
Seventy percent of survey respondents reported being satisfied with clear and consistent signage and wayfinding in Swampscott (see **Figure 23**). Ensuring that this signage is readable for persons with vision impairment or cognitive decline is a potential path for future improvement. More than half of survey respondents (56%) were dissatisfied with the availability of public restrooms in Swampscott (see **Figure 24**). This type of community feature was referred to as being, “beneficial to residents of all ages”.



**Figure 23. Satisfaction with clear and consistent signage and wayfinding around Swampscott**

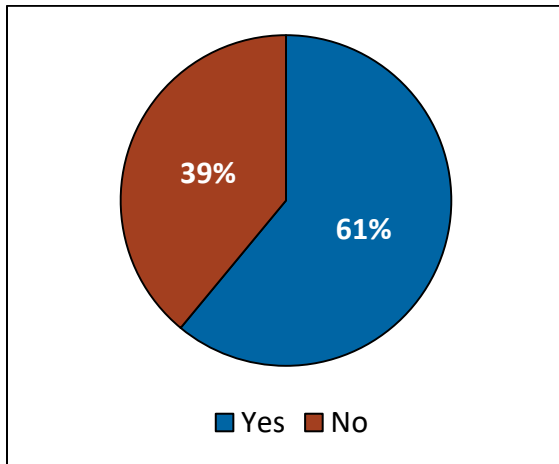


**Figure 24. Satisfaction with availability of public restrooms**



Many town amenities are highly valued, including the Library, the Senior Center, and the farmers market. However, a sizeable portion (39%) of the survey respondents reported that there are not enough places to go in Swampscott for socialization or leisure activity (see **Figure 25**). This was even more true among the under age 60 population—51% feel this way.

**Figure 25. “Are there sufficient places to go in Swampscott to socialize for leisure activity?”**



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*We could use [a place] for our residents in our downtown Humphrey Street center that would foster community & mix the age groups ... we should not be segregated by age- we need to engage with each other face to face, in a civil manner - less tribalism - more community!*

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Forum, focus group and interview participants identified snow removal as a major need of the older adults in Swampscott. Recent local policy changes now require that snow be removed from residential sidewalks. For persons who cannot physically accomplish this or are living on a fixed income, paying someone to shovel can become burdensome. These participants reiterated the importance of safe intersections and walkability elements (e.g., curb cuts) for making Swampscott a more livable community. In addition, they identified ways that the few local businesses could participate. For example, restaurants could assess whether the lighting in their establishments is bright enough to facilitate reading the menu or walking safely or if the music is soft enough to allow customers to hear their conversations. Restaurant management could consider offering senior discounts to encourage demonstrate their support of older residents.

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*It would be great to have a community center of some sort, such as a recreation and meeting Hall.*

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Elaborating on the benefit of being in close proximity to cities like Lynn, Boston and Salem but also towns like Marblehead and Nahant—forum participants talked about the need for better connections to these towns. For example, providing transportation to the local senior centers, Marblehead Theatre or the Lynn Auditorium for concerts and events could connect Swampscott residents with more places for recreation. There was also consensus among focus group participants, interviewees, and forum participants that although the current senior center in Swampscott offers much to older residents of the community—its capacity to meet any additional need is very limited. Despite being connected to the high school; the Swampscott Senior Center does not have regular access to exercise space. These participants highlighted the need for a community center. They described the creation of a community gathering space as a

way to complement Senior Center offerings and engage the younger segments of the population in social, educational, physical and wellness programs.

### **Ideas for Action in Swampscott: Outdoor Spaces & Buildings**

- Consider increasing accessibility within the Town to make it easier for older adults with or without a disability to take advantage of Swampscott amenities. For example, provide signage around Town in large print for those with decreased vision. Encourage Swampscott restaurants to participate in the Purple Table reservation program, a program that makes eating out more enjoyable for those with dementia or other conditions.
- In support of recent plans for the downtown<sup>17</sup> and waterfront areas<sup>18</sup>—advocate for the completion of sidewalk and intersection improvements, added handicap parking, shaded seating, and public restrooms that will improve walkability.
- Create a mechanism for residents to be informed about sidewalk repair plans and progress. For example, make the public works permits publicly accessible or generate a map of sidewalk repairs and update as progress is made<sup>19</sup>.
- Using the “Snow Angels” program as a model, consider other seasonal tasks where older residents might need help. (e.g., leaf removal or lawn mowing).
- Consider the development of a community center that would offer more space for physical activity and community gathering space.
- Review the relationship between the COA and the Swampscott High School to ensure that older adults have some access to the indoor walking track and other amenities.
- Replicate the Town garden in other locations and consider age friendly design such as waist high beds for accessibility.

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<sup>17</sup> [http://www.mapc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Final\\_Swampscottreport\\_1\\_17\\_13.pdf](http://www.mapc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Final_Swampscottreport_1_17_13.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.swampscottma.gov/town-administrator/pages/harbor-waterfront-plan-2018>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.cityofsanrafael.org/2-20-19-sidewalk-repair-program-see-live-updates-on-our-map/>

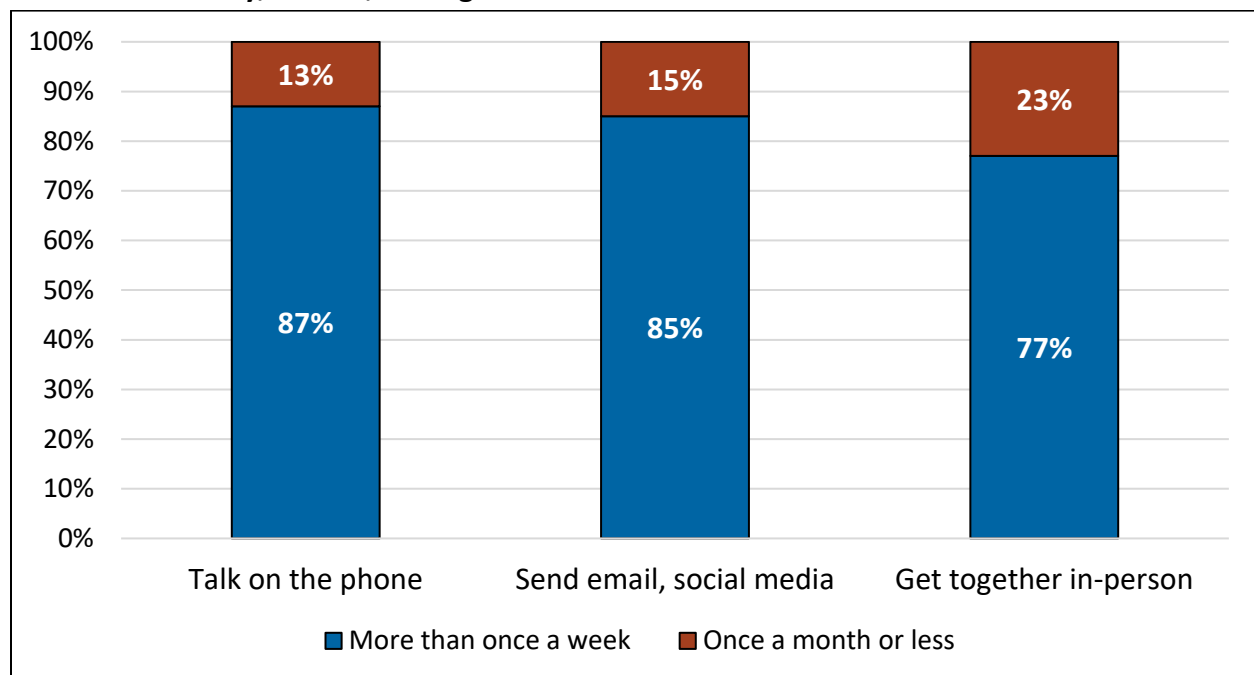
## Social Participation

Ensuring that ample and accessible participation activities are available is an important part of building an age-friendly community. Social participation includes virtual, telephone, and in person connections, with family, friends, and community members, and can also occur through activities and events at town and private facilities such as learning opportunities, fitness programs, and social activities.



Most Swampscott residents talk on the phone, send email, and get together in-person with family, friends, or neighbors more than once/week (see **Figure 26**). However, among respondents age 80 and older only 65% report using social media or email to contact their friends, family, or neighbors more than once a week (see **Appendix A**). This finding suggests that not all residents of Swampscott use web-based communications.

**Figure 26. "How often do you talk on the phone, send email, use social media, or get together to visit with family, friends, or neighbors?"**

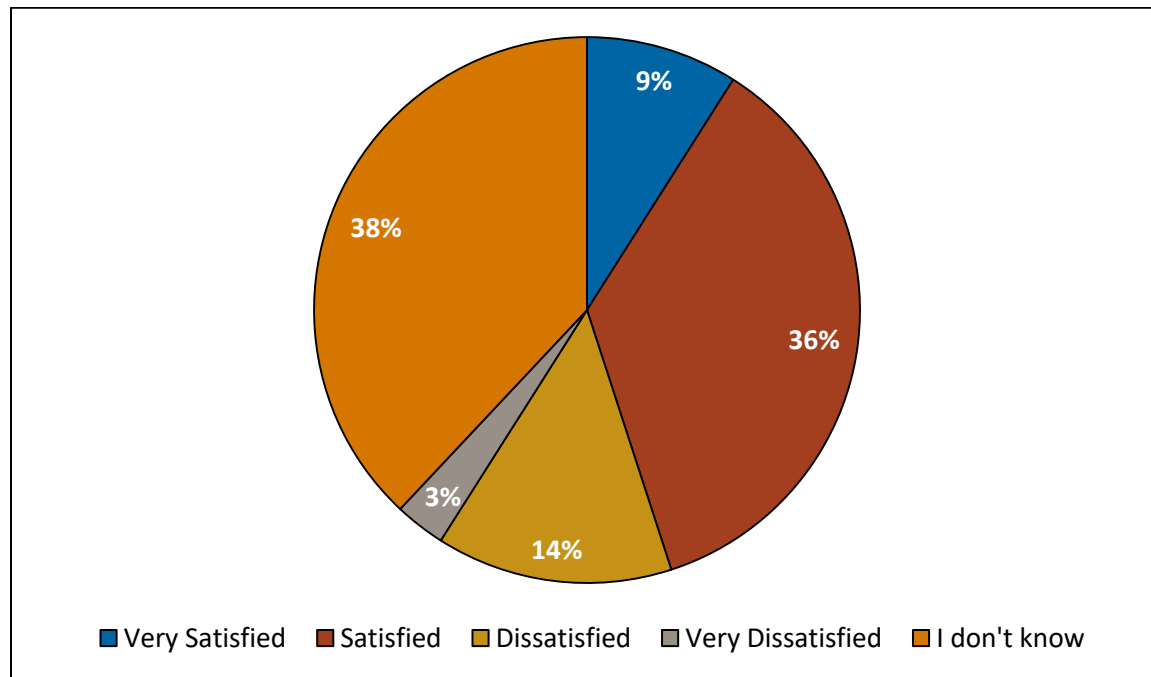


Most survey respondents (92%) know someone living within 30 minutes of their home on whom they could rely for help if they need it (see Appendix A). And many have talked with their neighbors in the past month (see **Table 5**). That said, between 18%-20% of survey respondents have no talked with their neighbors in the past month suggesting that there is a segment of Swampscott residents who are relatively disconnected from their neighborhood.

Table 5. In the past month, have you talked with any of your neighbors for 10 minutes or more?				
	Under Age 60	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Yes	82%	82%	84%	80%
No	18%	18%	16%	20%

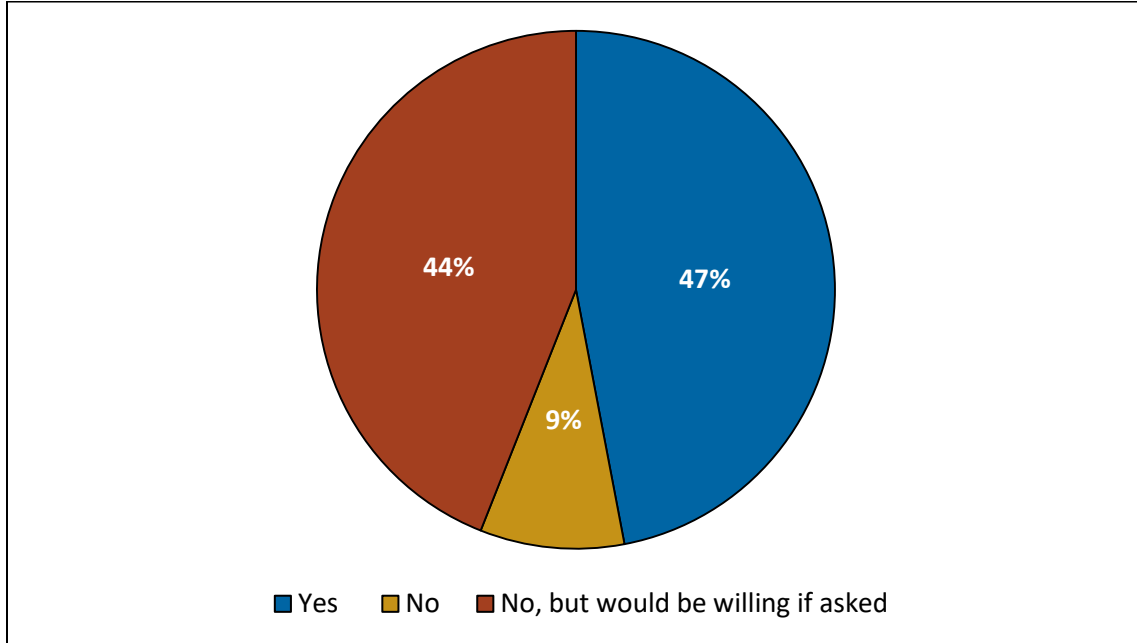
**Figure 27** shows that 17% of respondents are not satisfied with opportunities to gather informally with neighbors. Further, 38% of respondents said “I don’t know” when asked about opportunities for gathering with neighbors. These findings underpin the idea that strengthening neighbor-to-neighbor ties could be an important effort of the Swampscott for all Ages Initiative.

**Figure 27. Satisfaction with opportunities in your neighborhood for informal sharing and social interaction**



Survey participants were asked if they would ask a neighbor for help if they needed help with a minor task or errand and more than two-thirds (69%) of the respondents of all ages said they would (see **Appendix A**). In response to the survey question, “Do you provide any help to neighbors with minor tasks or errands?” 44% reported no, but they would be willing if asked (see **Figure 28**). These findings illustrate a possible opportunity to strengthen neighbor-to-neighbor relations in Swampscott as a way of supporting older residents wishing to age in place.

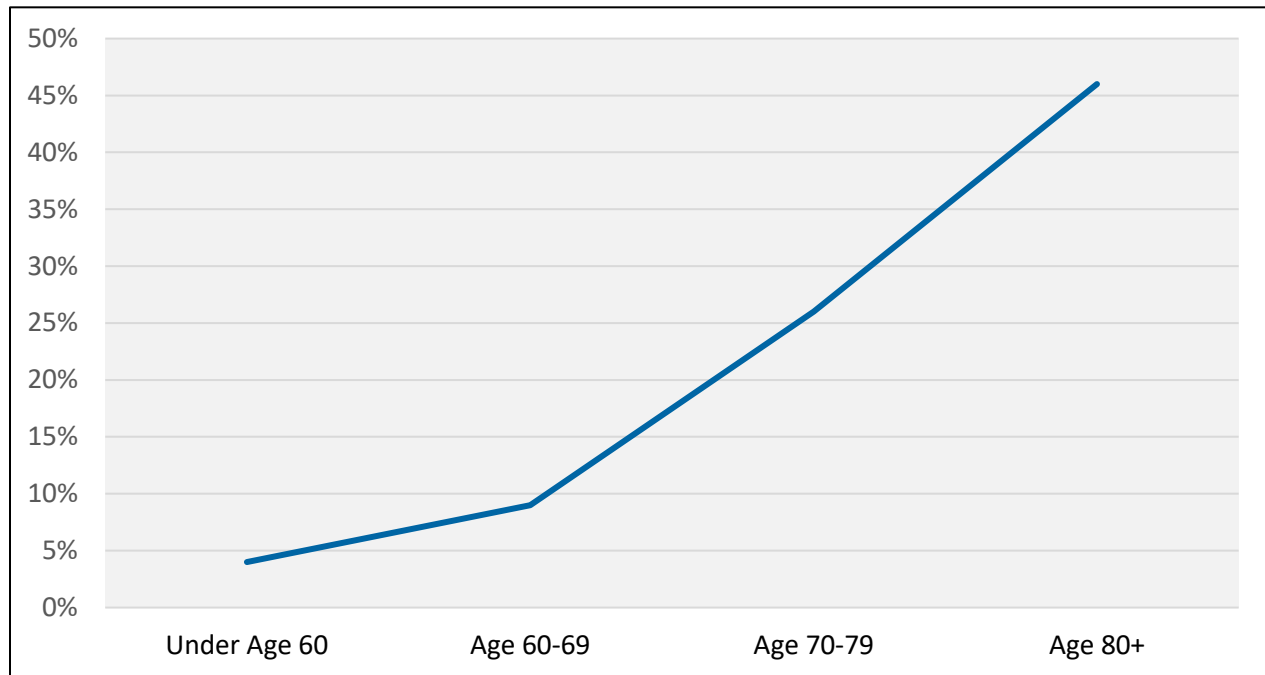
**Figure 28. Do you provide any help to neighbors with minor tasks or errands?**



### **Swampscott Senior Center**

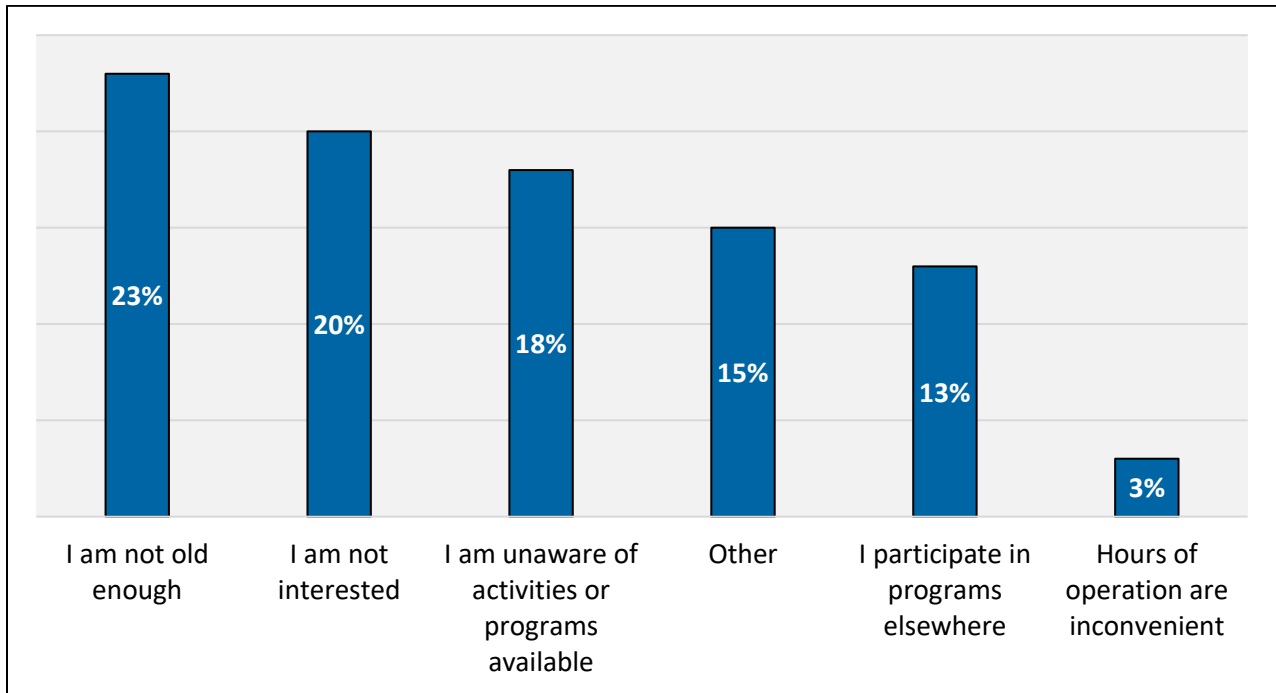
Senior centers play a role in the social participation of older adults. Survey results suggest that participation in the Swampscott Senior Center is considerably more common among older residents. As shown in **Figure 29**, just 4% of respondents under age 60 and 9% of respondents under age 70 have ever used programs or services offered by the Swampscott Senior Center.

**Figure 29. Percentage of respondents who have ever been to the Senior Center, by age group**



Overall, 18% of survey respondents reported ever having been to the Swampscott Senior Center. Of those who do not use the Senior Center, at least one out of five survey respondents reported the reason they have not attended is because they are “not old enough” or are “not interested” (see **Figure 30**). Sixteen percent of respondents provided reasons for non-participation other than those listed as options. Many commented that they “don’t need” the Senior Center—suggesting that the community perception that the Senior Center is a need-based municipal service—which is not the case in Swampscott. The Swampscott Senior Center can play a part in helping older adults age in place and in community. Residents may obtain transportation, health screening, or social services through their local COA. Older adults may seek opportunities for engagement and socialization through volunteer programs, learning opportunities and exercise programs, as well as social activities. These involvements can help community members maintain social support, remain active, prolong independence and improve quality of life. Some research suggests that participating in a Senior Center may reduce one’s sense of isolation, a highly significant outcome given the negative consequences of being disconnected socially.

**Figure 30. Reasons for not currently using programs or services at the Swampscott Senior Center**



Survey respondents were asked to name the types of programs and services that they would like to see made available in Swampscott. Responses were categorized by theme; and examples of those themes are presented in **Table 6**. Nearly all suggestions for additional programming and

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*A bigger senior center space could do a lot for the community.*

---

increased outreach would require growth of capacity in both staff and space of the Swampscott Senior Center. In fact, residents wrote in about the need for a larger community/senior center space that would better accommodate the growing population of older adults and create opportunities for multiple generations to gather.



Table 6. “What programs and services not currently offered through the Swampscott Senior Center would you like to see made available?”	
Additional Exercise & Wellness Classes	<i>Tai Chi, Yoga, seniors bicycle, Pilates</i>
	<i>Mindfulness meditation or massage</i>
Trips	<i>Inexpensive day trips, maybe some overnight trips...</i>
	<i>Trips to New England historic sites</i>
More diverse recreational and educational activities	<i>Spiritual memoir writing, theatre, mentoring with children/teens</i>
	<i>It would be great to have programs for men in their 60s—music tutoring? Woodworking? Watching local sports?</i>
	<i>Singles activities for my single sister!</i>
	<i>Music, book clubs, lectures or lifelong learning courses, oral histories</i>
Resources for Supporting Aging in Place	<i>Workshop for "senior-izing" our home; memory care for dementia folks</i>
	<i>Pet sitting and dog walking for seniors</i>

### **Ideas for Action in Swampscott: Social Participation**

- Initiate a Facebook page for older adults to share knowledge and resources as well as make requests and find peers with similar interests in attending events.
- Explore the possibility of increasing the number of active adult events such as bowling, wine tasting, or an indoor walking group.
- Consider strengthening intergenerational activities through the creation of a senior-student liaison who can make connections and share information about opportunities for intergenerational activity throughout the community (e.g., inviting older adults to attend Big Blue Band concerts etc.).
- Develop a “companion” program that connects residents who have a shared interests (e.g., museum visit, day trip, or walking). This type of connection can provide socialization, transportation, and recreation.
- Identify neighborhood-based programs or mechanisms to strengthen informal networks in neighborhoods and ensure that existing neighborhood-based activities are inclusive of older residents.

- Consider ways to welcome first-time participants to the Senior Center who are reluctant to participate on their own (e.g., a welcoming committee or a “buddy” program that encourages current users to bring a friend).
- Educate community organizations and faith communities about who to contact if they identify someone who may be at risk of social isolation.
- Develop an Age Friendly regional coalition to strategize about ways that area senior centers can work together to ensure that all older residents have access to the rich array of programs without duplication of effort. Explore the development of a “specialty senior center model”. For example, the Marblehead Senior Center could promote its exercise programs to residents of area communities, the Nahant Senior Center could do the same with its arts and cultural programs and the Swampscott Senior Center could also contribute through the promotion of its recreational programs and health clinics. Transportation and other resources could be shared.
- Consider how the various clubs in town (e.g., yacht, golf, rotary, garden) are connected to the COA and identify opportunities for co-hosting events or collaborating to reach a larger swatch of older residents.

## Civic Participation and Employment

There are a number of volunteer opportunities in Swampscott including at the Senior Center, the library, and Bertram House. Swampscott residents are also involved in Town governance, including membership on numerous Boards and Councils. In this section, information on employment in Swampscott is offered, along with local volunteer and other civic engagements.

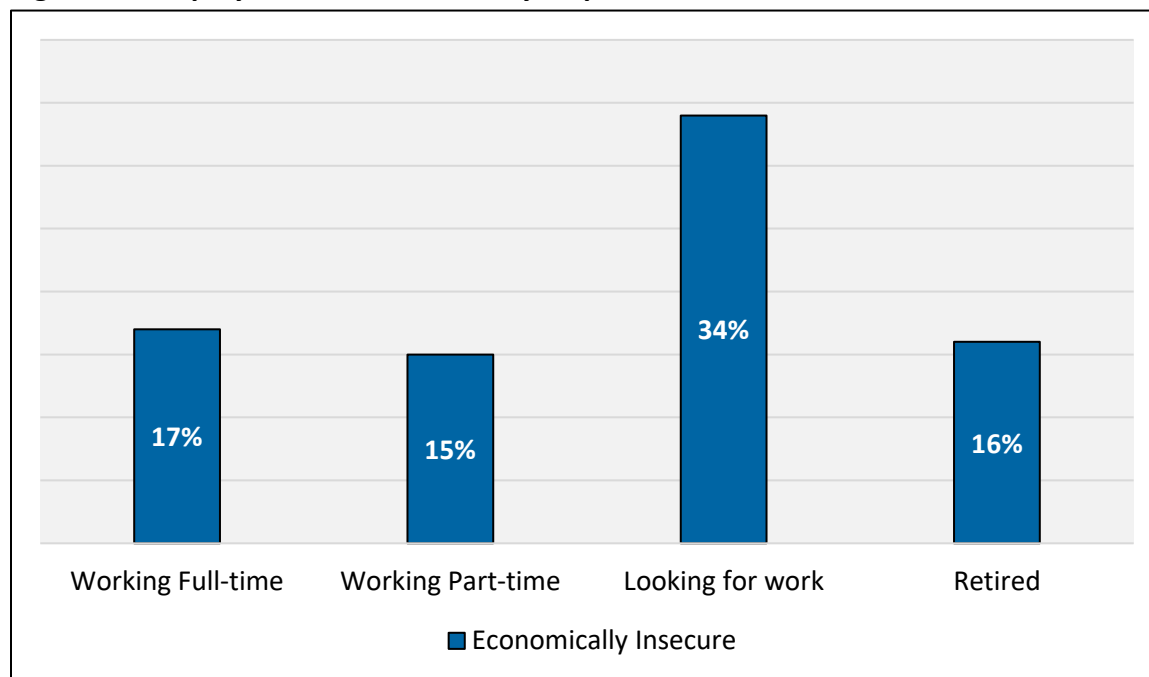


### Employment

Similar to older adults living in communities throughout the U.S., a large proportion of Swampscott residents aged 65 and over remain in the workforce. Approximately out of ten Swampscott residents age 65 to 74 are participating in the labor force on at least a part-time basis, along with nearly 5% of residents age 75 and older (ACS, 2013-2017, Table S2301). In the community survey distributed for the Swampscott Age Friendly initiative, we asked respondents

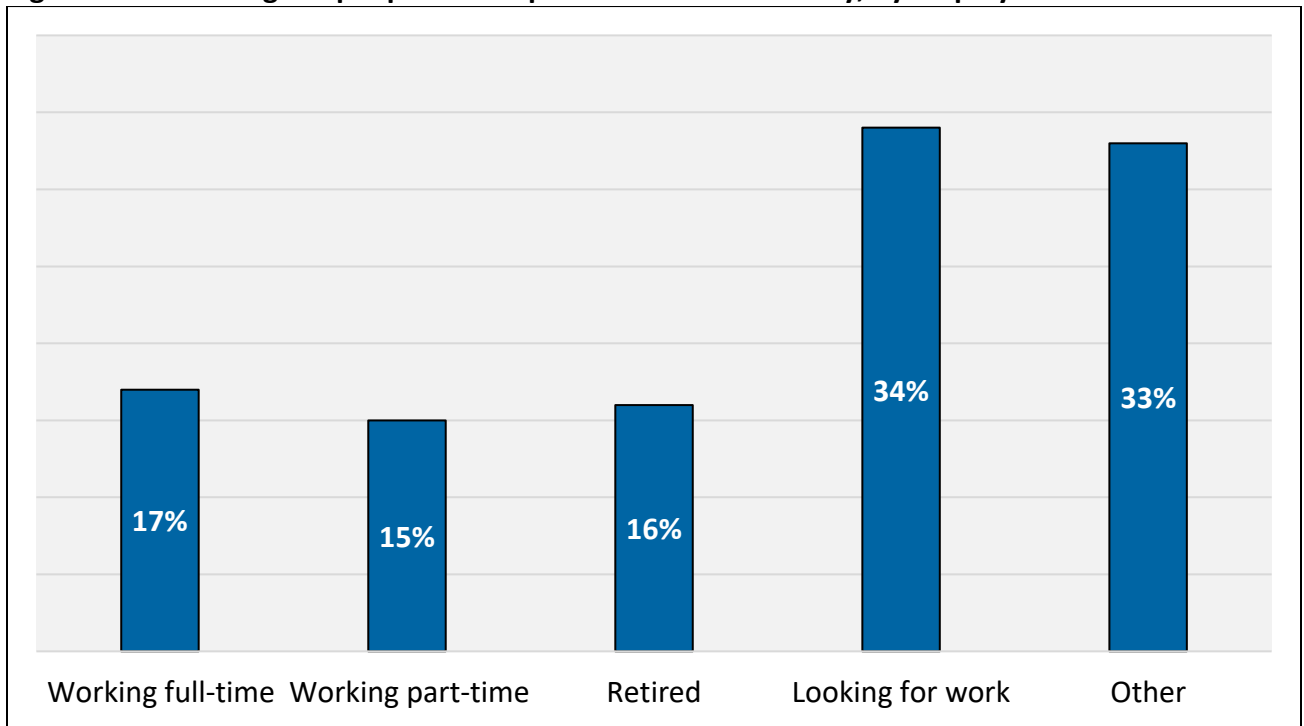
their employment status and found a similar pattern of results (see **Figure 31**). About six percent of survey respondents marked other and wrote in that they were a homemaker, volunteer, self-employed, or disabled.

**Figure 31. Employment status of survey respondents**

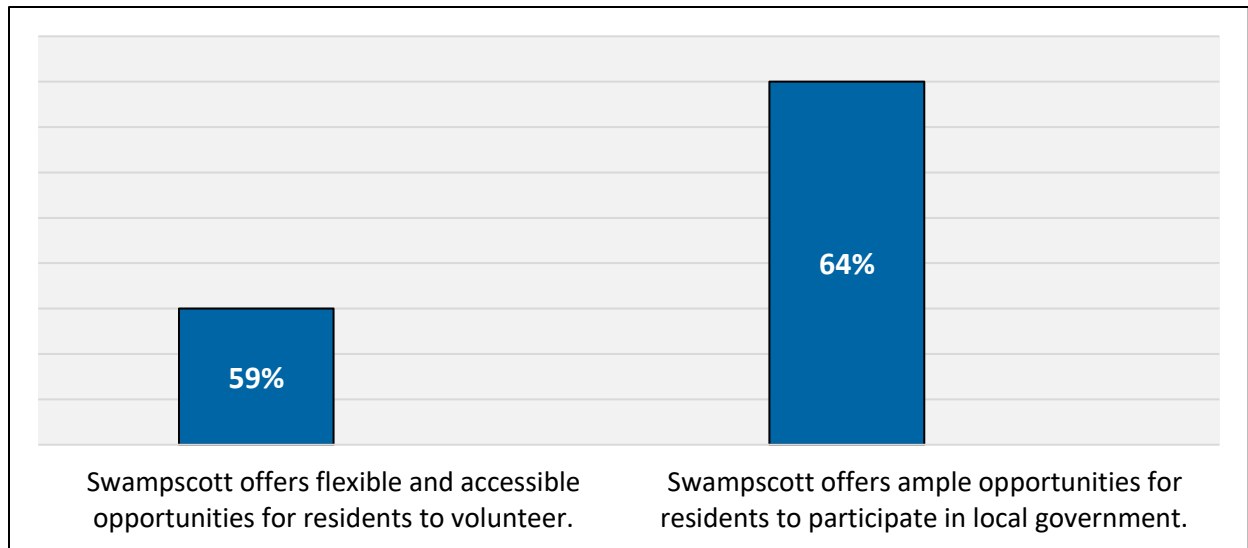


**Figure 32** shows the share of respondents who are struggling financially based on their employment status. Notably, 34% of respondents who are looking for work and 33% reporting “other” types of employment status (e.g., self-employed, disabled) are financially insecure. Similarly, some of the survey respondents who are currently working or are retired are also struggling financially. Exploring opportunities to support these individuals through programs that provide discounts and work-off opportunities may be helpful.

**Figure 32. Percentage of people who report economic insecurity, by employment status**



**Figure 33. Those who agree that there are opportunities for civic engagement and employment in Swampscott**



In the community survey, respondents were asked to select their level of agreement with the following statements: 1) Swampscott offers flexible and accessible opportunities for residents to volunteer; and 2) Swampscott offers ample opportunities for residents to participate in local government. The majority of survey respondents agreed with statements about volunteering and participation in local government (see **Figure 33**). Further, a sizeable share of respondents

marked “I don’t know” in response to these questions (see **Appendix A.**). It is possible these individuals do not have time to volunteer or participate in local government, have not explored the opportunities, or are not able to or interested in becoming active in the community for a variety of other reasons.

### **Ideas for Action in Swampscott: Civic Engagement & Employment**

- Designate a group of resident advocates who will consistently attend board and committee meetings to raise awareness of older adult issues.
- As more residents begin to retire, consider ways for them to get connected with volunteer opportunities and post-retirement work.
  - Consider hosting a “retirement fair” and invite residents who have recently turned 65 as well as business and local organizations seeking part time employees or volunteers.
  - Facilitate “retirement groups” where groups of residents can meet regularly to develop
- Expand programming around retirement planning or finding a post-retirement job
- Continue providing opportunities for residents to volunteer and stay civically engaged in town activities. Assure that residents can easily identify the opportunities that already exist through the Town or other local organizations and groups.
- Develop an all ages civic academy<sup>2021</sup> that focuses on educating residents about municipal processes and empowering residents to advocate on behalf of themselves and their peers.

### Community and Health Services

A broad range of community and health services and supports was considered in this study, including the availability of nearby healthcare facilities, access to nutrition and home care services, services available through the Swampscott Senior Center, and supports for caregivers. Taken together, these features impact the health and well-being of Swampscott older residents.



<sup>20</sup> [http://www.wenhamma.gov/citizens\\_leadership\\_academy/](http://www.wenhamma.gov/citizens_leadership_academy/)

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.boston.gov/news/first-senior-civic-academy-cohort-graduates>

Participants at the community forums and focus groups spoke highly about the access to physical health services in neighboring communities and in Boston as well as the many community services provided by the Swampscott Senior Center. The library and faith groups also were discussed as important community organizations where people participate in programs, find community, and learn about resources. Key informants and focus group participants described the need for particularly isolated seniors to be identified and supported. In these high risk cases, being aware of the situation and communicating across departments can reduce the impact of, and perhaps prevent, crisis situations.

---

*{I'm concerned about...}  
Growing disabled and not  
being able to take care of  
myself and my home*

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Data provided by the Massachusetts Healthy Aging Collaborative (MHAC) for the population age 65 and older suggest that along many dimensions, Swampscott older residents are in better health than their peers in Massachusetts as a whole<sup>22</sup>. Rates of hypertension, anxiety disorders, diabetes, COPD, and several other chronic conditions are estimated to be lower in Swampscott than in Massachusetts overall. According to these data, 59% of Swampscott residents age 65 and older have four or more chronic conditions, compared to a Massachusetts average of 61%. An estimated 12% of Swampscott residents age 65 and older have been diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease or dementia, a prevalence that is lower than the statewide average of 14%. Note that this prevalence level equates to an estimate 310 Swampscott residents age 65 and older with Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia, a number that is likely to increase as the older population becomes larger since risk of dementia increases with age. Data from MHAC suggest that Swampscott residents age 65 and older are more likely to engage in health promoting behaviors such as getting the recommended levels of physical activity or not smoking compared to the statewide average. However, 7% of Swampscott residents age 60 and older report their health status as fair or poor.

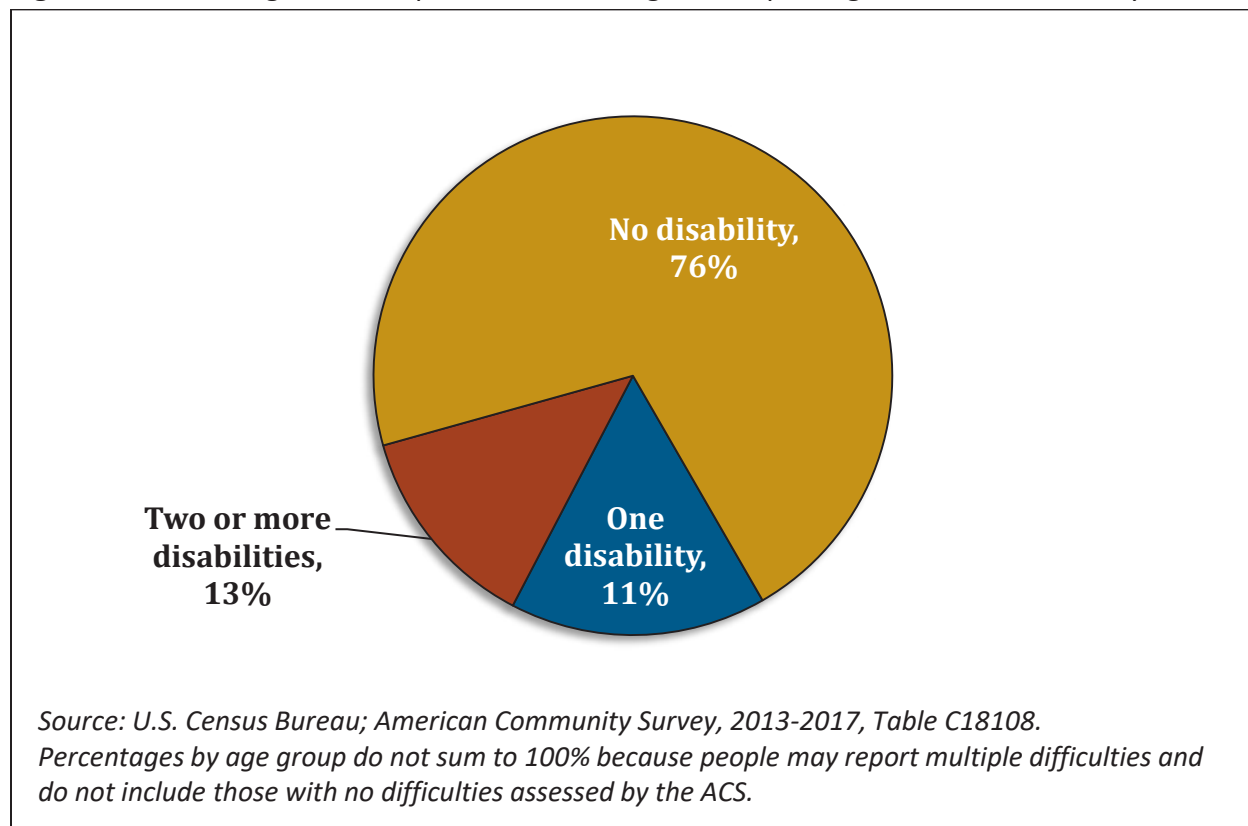
The increased likelihood of acquiring disability with age is evident in data from the ACS. Nearly one-quarter of Swampscott residents age 65 and older experience some level of disability that could impact their ability to function independently in the community. About 11% of Swampscott's residents age 65 and older report a single disability, and nearly 13% report two or more disabilities (see **Figure 34**). Among the different types of disability that are assessed in ACS, the most commonly cited by Swampscott residents 65 and older were ambulatory difficulties (difficulty walking or climbing stairs), independent living limitations (difficulty doing errands

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<sup>22</sup> See Massachusetts Health Aging Collaborative at <https://mahealthyagingcollaborative.org/data-report/explore-the-profiles/community-profiles/>

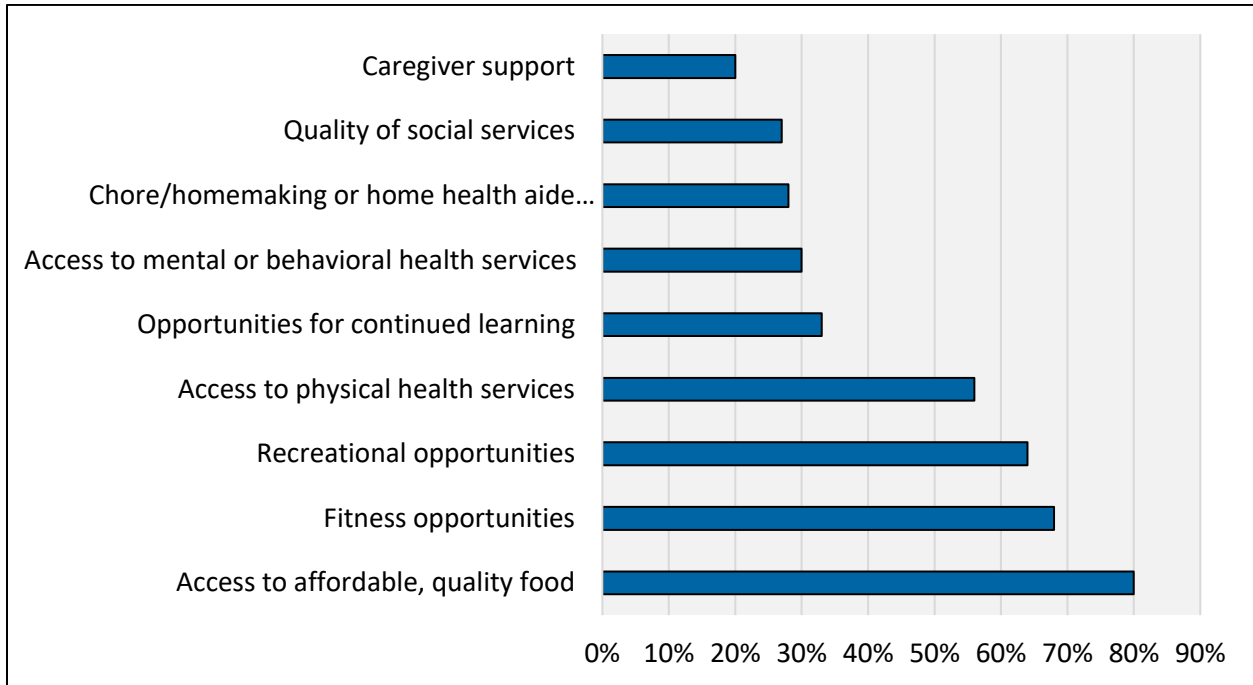
alone, such as visiting a doctor’s office or shopping), and hearing problems. Each difficulty was reported by 11% of the older population in Swampscott (ACS 2013-2017, Table S1810). Other disabilities experienced by older Swampscott residents include cognitive difficulty (9%), self-care difficulties (6%), and vision difficulties (4%). Risk of disability increases with age; indeed, while 11% of Swampscott residents age 65-74 report at least one disability, 38% of residents age 75 and older report disability.

**Figure 34.** Percentage of Swampscott residents age 65+ reporting at least one disability.



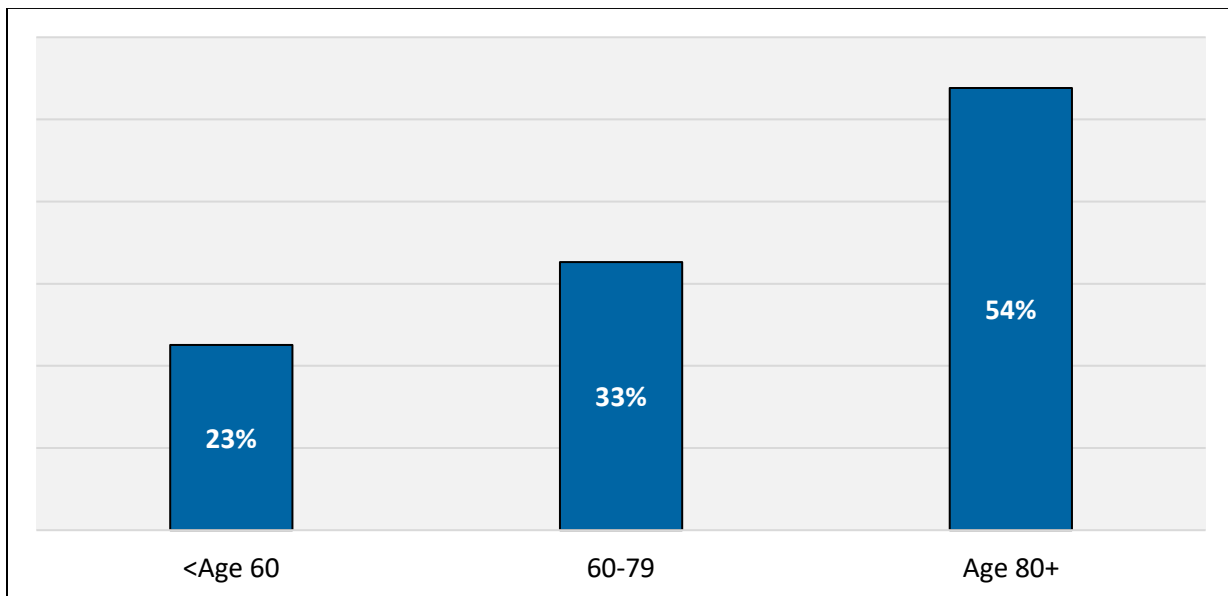
Only 30% of respondents reported being satisfied with access to mental or behavioral health services (see **Figure 35**) and many responded “I don’t know” to this question (see **Appendix A**), indicating a low uptake of these services and/or low levels of awareness of what exists. During the stakeholder focus group and key informant interviews, discussion occurred regarding the lack of attention to mental health issues for older residents. Patterns of satisfaction with these programs and services were similar among caregivers and those reporting a disability---and yet large proportions of “I don’t know” response remained.

**Figure 35. Percentage satisfied with aspects of community and health services**



Almost half of all respondents stated that they currently or have in the past five years provided care or assistance to a person who was disabled, frail, or struggling with a physical or mental health condition and that number is similar across all age ranges (see **Appendix A**). For more than one third of the caregivers, the care recipient lives or lived with the caregiver and this number is higher for older caregivers, many of whom may be caring for a spouse (see **Figure 36**).

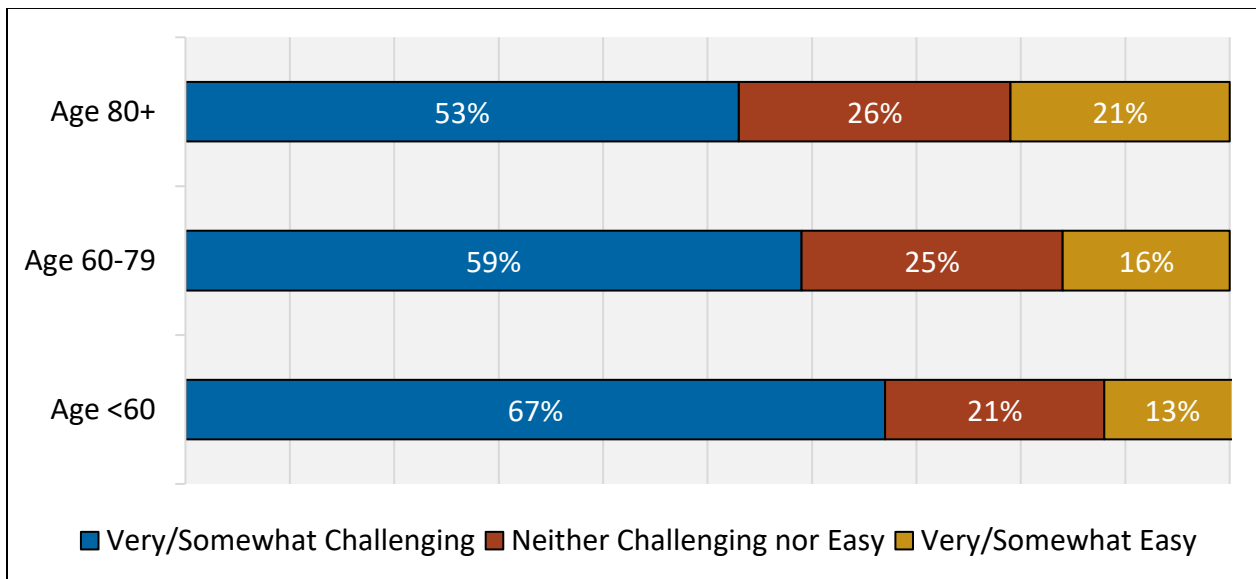
**Figure 36. Percentage of Caregivers who lived with the care recipient, by age**





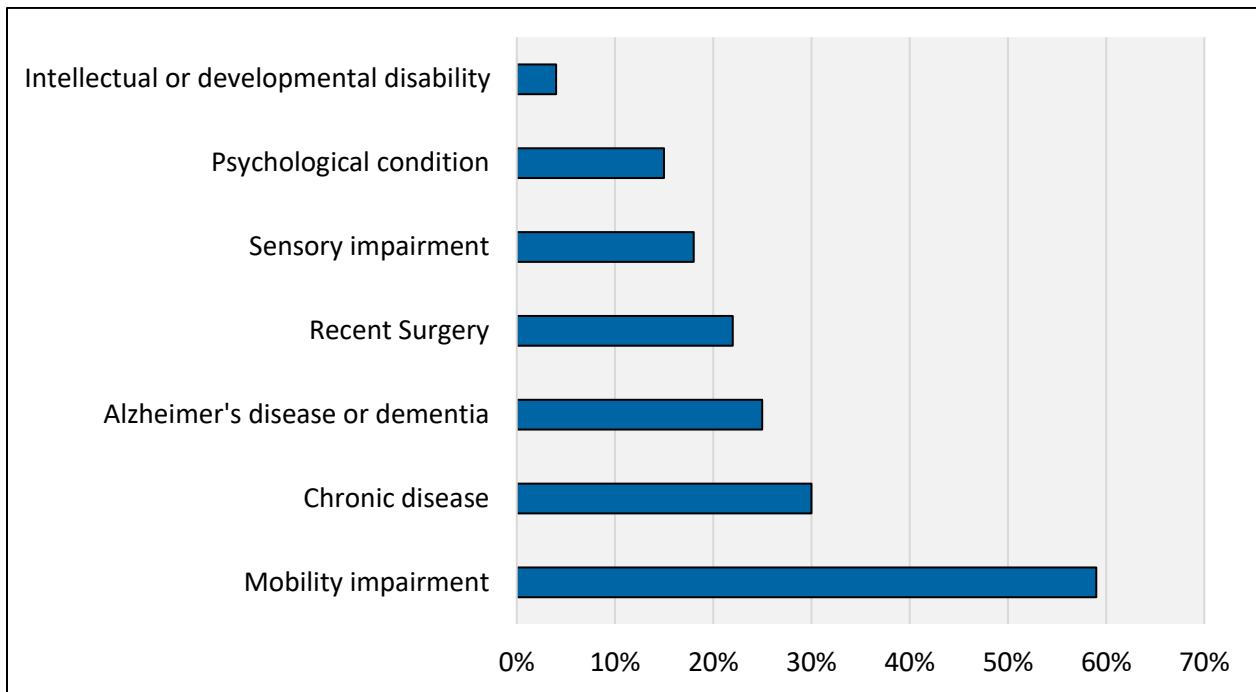
Many of those who have provided care or assistance to someone within the past five years stated that it was very or somewhat challenging to provide this care and meet other family and/or work responsibilities. This was especially true for those under age 60, where 67% of those providing care reported this was very or somewhat challenging (see **Figure 37**). Many in this age group are likely still working and therefore may be struggling to meet the demands of both caregiving and work. Even for the other age groups, between 53% and 59% of those who provide care find it very or somewhat challenging. Expanded services (e.g., transportation to adult day programs) and programming (e.g., support groups) might be indicated to support caregivers.

**Figure 37. “How Challenging is/was it for you to care for this person(s) and meet your other responsibilities with family and/or work?”, by age group**



Caregivers were asked to indicate which conditions were experienced by their care recipient; the most frequently marked condition was mobility impairment (such as difficulty walking or climbing stairs) (59%; see **Figure 38**), while 25% of the people the survey respondents cared for had Alzheimer’s or dementia, 30% were living with a chronic disease (such as cancer, diabetes, or asthma). Many respondents indicated that their care recipient had more than one disability.

**Figure 38. Type of condition of the care recipient**




**Ideas for Action in Swampscott: Community Supports & Health Services**

- Improve community knowledge about available services.
  - While broadening awareness overall, take special efforts to improve awareness and access to those who could benefit from services, especially those with participation limitations or who are providing care to someone.
  - Host a “crash course in caregiving” to provide families with necessary information about services and supports.
    - Create opportunities to connect the Greater Lynn Senior Services (GLSS) with family caregivers.
- Encourage a formal collaboration between the police, fire, and Swampscott Senior Center departments to identify “at risk” older adults in Swampscott. If possible, formulate a routine check-in with these residents to stay ahead of crisis-situations.
  - Consider requiring a home-visit before a resident can obtain a lock box or life alert from the Swampscott Fire Department as a way of screening for risk factors related to falls or isolation.
- Consider the necessary increase in staff and building capacity of the Swampscott Senior Center so that additional programming and services can be obtained by the growing population of older residents.
- Consider hosting a “Caregiver’s Night Out”.
  - Explore partnerships with volunteer groups to provide respite care during the event.
- Expand and develop dementia-friendly initiatives.

- Improve public education about dementia, access to adult day programs, and businesses that are trained to interact with people with dementia may be considered.
- Promote greater awareness of dementia in the community. Participate in state-wide and national events like “Purple Pew” or the Walk to End Alzheimer’s, offer a free memory screening in partnership with a healthcare professional, or raise awareness in the workplace by sponsoring a “Go casual for a cause” Friday.
- Pilot test a memory café or consider providing transportation to a nearby memory café.

## Communication and Information

Several questions included on the survey related to communication and accessing information. People access information through a variety of methods and these methods vary based on age. When survey participants were asked how they currently obtain information about programs, activities, and services in their home (with the option to check all that apply), word of mouth; local newspaper, and social media were



An age-friendly community provides opportunities for residents to stay connected and informed. Promoting widespread awareness of local services, programs and resources maximizes the impact of community assets.

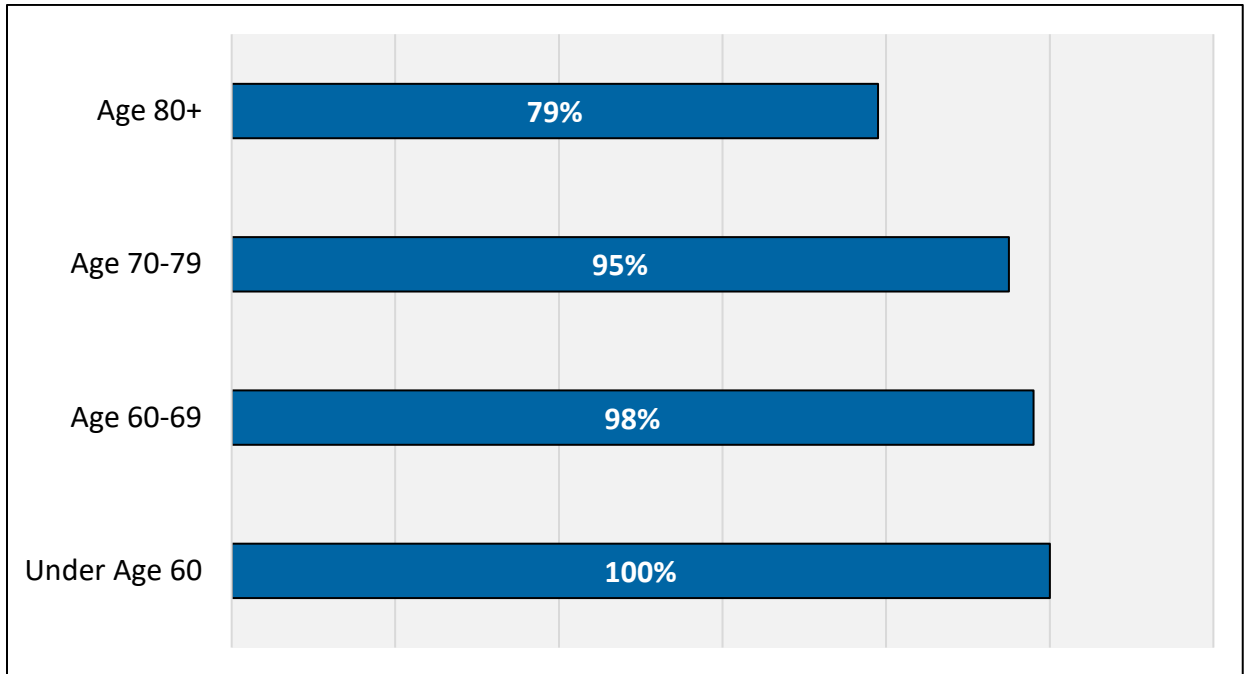
the three most common responses for all ages (52%, 51%, 30% respectively). The Town website is an important avenue of information for those under age 70 while only 9% of those age 80 and older use this method. The Senior Center Newsletter is a common method of obtaining information for those age 80 and older (see **Table 7**).

**Table 7. “How do you currently obtain information about programs, activities, and services in your community? (Check all that apply)”**

	Under Age 60	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+	All Ages
Local newspaper	46%	50%	57%	64%	51%
Word of mouth	60%	52%	53%	55%	52%
The Town’s website	35%	23%	15%	9%	20%
Social media postings (e.g., Facebook, Twitter)	62%	35%	20%	6%	30%
Faith-based organizations	9%	10%	12%	12%	10%
Senior Center Newsletter	2%	5%	17%	34%	12%
TV/Radio	7%	7%	9%	19%	9%
Other	10%	9%	9%	11%	9%

Many survey respondents (88%) feel informed about what to do in the event of a weather or other emergency (see **Appendix A**), suggesting that essential information about emergency resources are widely disseminated throughout the community. As well, the majority of survey respondents are able to access the Internet at home through use of a smartphone, home computer, laptop, or tablet. Twenty-one percent of those 80 and older, however, do not have access to the Internet at home (see **Figure 39**). These individuals may struggle to learn about community programming, available services and resources unless information is communicated through other methods.

**Figure 39. Percentage of survey respondents who have Internet access at home, by age group**



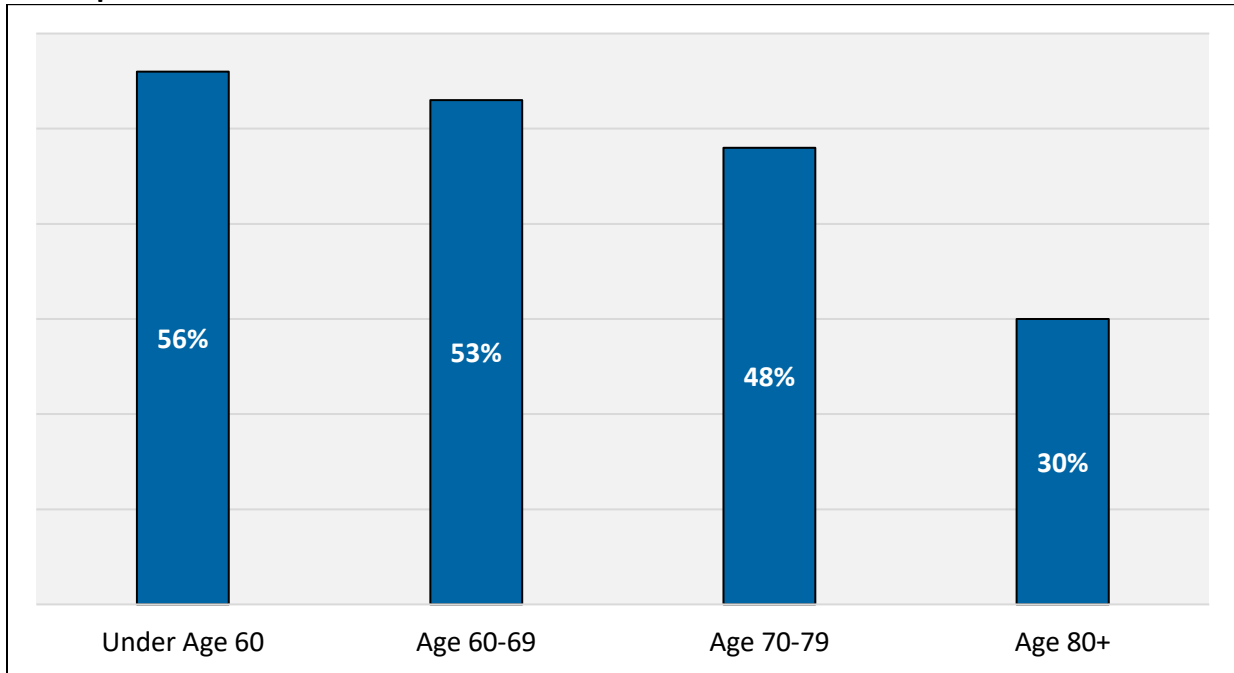
However, when asked, “Would you know whom to contact in Swampscott should you or someone in your family need help accessing social services, health services or other municipal services?”, 49% of all respondents said no. Stronger awareness is evident among respondents age 80 and older, among whom only 30% of survey respondents responded that they don’t know who to contact (see **Figure 40**). It is possible that many in the older cohort have already needed services, and therefore figured out how to access them. Still, many respondents in all age groups lack this knowledge.

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*Swampscott should publish and mail to each address at least once a year a complete "Guide" for ALL town services and phone numbers and contacts; including anything related to this survey. i.e., a "one-shop-guide" to services and government in Swampscott.*

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**Figure 40. Percentage of respondents who do NOT know who to contact in Swampscott should they or someone in their family need help accessing social services, health services, or municipal services.**



**Ideas for Action in Swampscott: Communication & Information**

- Consider scheduling quarterly meetings of key employees who work for organizations that provide services to older adults, providing an avenue to share information. Consider it a human service networking event.
- Continue to disseminate information in multiple forms and provide print copies of important information in places other than the Senior Center and utilize local newspaper as a mechanism for getting information distributed. Consider a “senior sentiment” as an editorial column to engage older residents with relevant topics.
- Explore the possibility of having a centralized social calendar for events happening around Swampscott as a way of making residents aware of programs (e.g., library, Senior Center, recreation, church groups).
- Disseminate information about existing information channels in Town. Consider developing a “how to” guide that includes instructions on things like how to post something to the Town website, how to use the robo-call system, how to submit a letter to the editor.

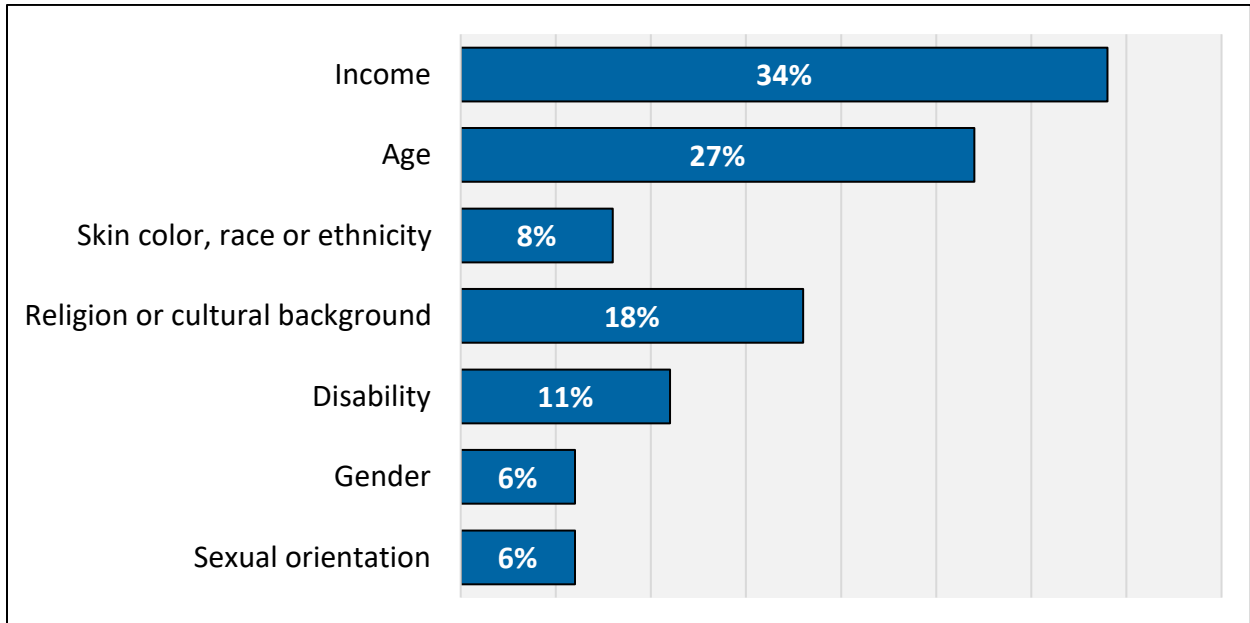
## Respect and Social Inclusion

During the community forum, several participants acknowledged the “small-town feel” and inclusive nature of Swampscott. One individual mentioned that as a parent of a special needs child, “it takes a village and that village exists in Swampscott”. In addition, several attendees at the community forum identified the poor conditions of the public senior housing in Swampscott; and the feelings of exclusion by those who reside in these buildings. Key informants talked about the vulnerability of some older adults in Swampscott with respect to social isolation. Older people living alone and those with mental or physical impairment may fall victim to fraud or other scams and may also be at higher risk for becoming totally homebound or developing conditions like hoarding.



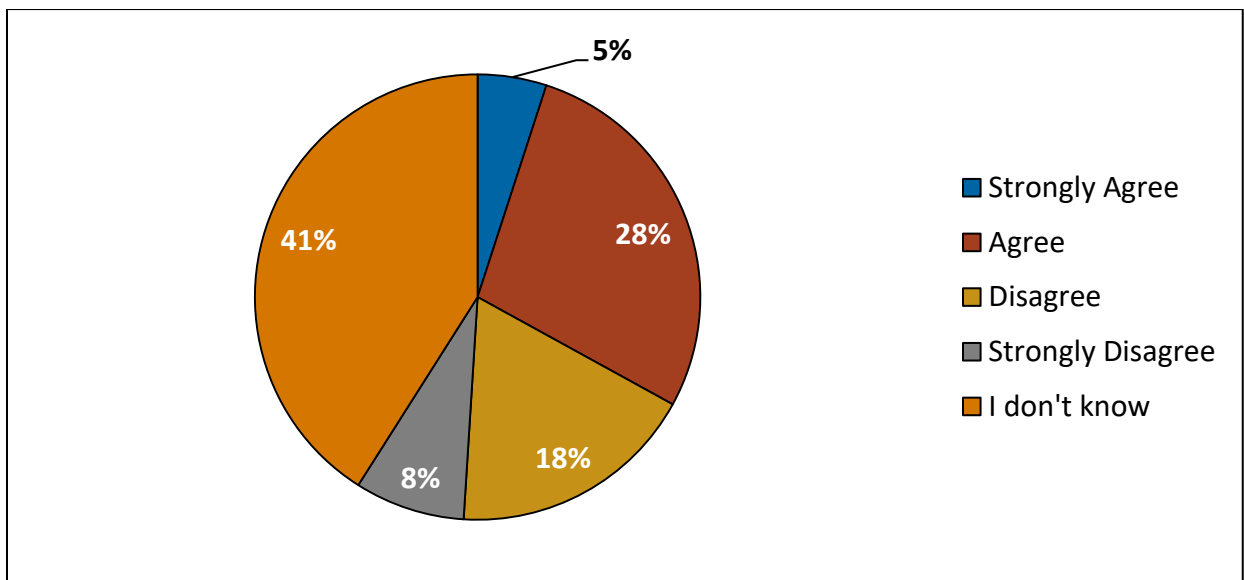
Survey respondents answered the question, “Have you ever felt excluded in Swampscott because of your (Check all that apply)” with response options of skin color, race or ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, gender, religion or cultural background, income, disability, or other. Respondents could also mark, “No, I have never felt excluded.” While the majority of people who responded to the survey have never felt excluded, 17% of survey respondents felt excluded based on at least one dimension. Among those reporting having felt excluded, the most common reason was income (34%) while 27% of the respondents felt excluded because of age (see **Figure 41**). Several respondents marked “other”, noting other reasons for exclusion, such as not being a “native” to Swampscott, or not feeling excluded for being single or not having children.

**Figure 41. Percentage feeling excluded in Swampscott, by reason for exclusion**



Survey respondents were asked the extent to which they agree with the following statement: “Local policymakers take into account the interests and concerns of older residents”; and 26% of respondents disagreed (see **Figure 42**) that local policymakers in Swampscott take into account the interests and concerns of older residents. Improving lines of communication between older residents and local policymakers could improve this public perception.

**Figure 42. "How satisfied are you with the extent to which local policy makers take into account the interests and concerns of residents?"**





### **Ideas for Action in Swampscott: Respect and Inclusion**

- Designate a group of resident advocates who will consistently attend board and committee meetings to raise awareness of older adult issues.
- Review existing processes for collecting public input on planning and policy change to ensure that it is Age Friendly. For example, is transportation available for public meetings or are surveys made available in hard-copy as well as online.
- Consider accessibility of public events, including seating, restrooms and cost to ensure that all residents feel welcome and supported.
- Consider educating “front facing staff” of Town offices on how to communicate with people with memory impairment and ensure that all older residents are treated with respect.
- Swampscott for All Ages Committee may wish to embed themes of inclusion in their mission statement and consider opportunities to build a broad-based coalition to tackle the issue of inclusion, involving representatives from faith communities, disability organizations, the schools, the Senior Center and other organizations committed to working collaboratively on this issue.
- Consider accessibility issues when planning community events; this includes taking into account the cost of participation, which may be out of reach for those with economic challenges.
- Consider strategies to improve outreach to all residents, including residents of senior public housing, as a means of promoting awareness and inclusion.

### **Conclusions and Priorities**

The number of older Swampscott residents is already sizable, and projections suggest it will increase within the next decade. Therefore, it is important to consider how well features of the Town, the services and amenities available, and virtually every aspect of the community align with the age demographic moving forward. A broad range of findings are reported in this document, highlighting the many positive features of Swampscott as well as concerns expressed by older residents. While many of the findings, and the recommendations that follow, intersect with the scope of responsibility of the Swampscott Senior Center and other municipal services, it is understood that responding to many needs and concerns expressed in the community will require the involvement of other municipal offices or community stakeholders, and some will require substantial collaborative effort. Domain-specific findings from this study are identified within each section above. Broad conclusions and priorities for next steps are outlined here.

Study findings point to many strengths of Swampscott that contribute to its livability. Residents appreciate the historic nature of the community and the proximity to the ocean and Boston. They have developed friends and established community in the Town and the majority want to remain in Swampscott as they age. The purpose of the study was to learn about areas for improvement to support aging in Swampscott, and study findings point to dissatisfaction in several areas. Many

residents expressed concern about being able to remain in Swampscott as they age due to the cost of living and availability of housing. There are few options for downsizing and one-level living in Swampscott and maintaining one's current home and paying taxes is unattainable for many. Not to mention that the existing senior housing in Swampscott is in poor condition; although 38 affordable senior units are scheduled to be built at the B'nai B'rith Housing development<sup>23</sup>. As well, while Swampscott has some transportation options (e.g., the RIDE, the Senior Center vans, commuter rail, and few public buses), residents struggle to travel on the weekends when public transportation is limited and the Senior Center is closed. Specifically, medical transportation is limited in Swampscott.

The conditions of sidewalks, lighting, shaded seating, signage, bus shelters, and public bathrooms were all identified as needs of Swampscott to become more age and dementia friendly. However, there are several plans that have been done in recent years to address these outdoor space/accessibility issues. This report supports those "roadmaps" and encourages those plans to be done with an age friendly lens.

Several additional concerns were identified in the study. Some Swampscott older adults don't feel valued or heard. Social isolation and the potential for social isolation also emerged as a concern. Social connections are important as one ages, yet many Swampscott residents don't know someone living nearby and don't talk with neighbors often. And most importantly, communication emerged as a challenge within the Town and across all areas of livability. Many services and programs are already available that might support residents who are isolated, dealing with economic insecurity, or lacking transportation, for example, but many people don't know about these services. Spreading the word about the solutions can be challenging due to the different preferences for receiving communication in Swampscott.

#### Prioritizing next steps

Study findings point to many strengths of Swampscott that contribute to its livability, including the historic nature of the community, the walkable waterfront, and the proximity to Boston and surrounding communities like Lynn, Salem, Marblehead, and Nahant. Yet some aspects of Swampscott are regarded less positively. The cost of living and limited number of downsizing options are a concern for many study participants. Walkability of the town—including sidewalk quality, safety of intersections, and amenities like seating, lighting and restrooms impede older residents from fully engaging in the community. Some alternatives to driving exist in Swampscott, however transportation remains a challenge for some residents. Equally important, there appears to be a segment of the population that is isolated or at risk of isolation. By putting

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<sup>23</sup> <https://www.itemlive.com/2019/07/18/gov-baker-announces-80-million-in-funding-for-affordable-housing-projects/>

cross-departmental strategies in place to respond to emergency needs of those who are isolated or might be at risk of isolation, the Town can work to prevent extreme isolation and the crises that often come along with that condition.

Communication crosses all domains addressed within this study. As such, one priority may be to improve communication about available resources. Many programs are available in Town but residents are either unaware of them or unable to access them. Another priority for the Swampscott for All Ages initiative may be to identify strategies to empower older adults living in Swampscott to remain civically engaged through advocacy and volunteer work. Although the residents of Swampscott have a wide range of interests in social and recreational activities--- there are not many places in town to gather communally to engage in these activities. The capacity of the existing buildings—library, senior center, and the Swampscott Recreation Department is limited. Many participants commented on the value that a community center space would add to the livability of the town for residents of all ages. In addition, many residents currently participate in activities in surrounding communities; and yet transportation and information about these resources is uneven. Given the close proximity to other communities and the goals of advancing Governor Baker’s Age Friendly State initiative, opportunities for a more age friendly region should be pursued in this geographic region.

It is worth highlighting that an age friendly community is also supportive and inclusive of people living with dementia and their families. Many Swampscott residents provide care for a loved one, 25% of those caregivers are providing care to someone with dementia; and survey results show that this is challenging for many. It appears that many who provide care don’t know or don’t take advantage of the currently available services (e.g., social services, homemaking services). Exploring strategies to reach these vulnerable populations is important to share information about the services available and to learn from those vulnerable populations or those who are connected to them.

Many projects to improve livability in Swampscott are already underway and therefore, we suggest building on the momentum of projects already in place. The Swampscott for All Ages Committee and the Senior Center have an important role to play in listening to and advocating for the needs of Swampscott’s older residents.

## Appendix A: Community Survey Results

Note: Appendix tables are based on 1,645 responses to the Swampscott Needs Assessment Project Survey, conducted in Fall, 2018. 290 responses were received online with the rest of the responses received by mail. Total response rate was 33%. See text for additional details.

### How long have you lived in Swampscott? (Check only one)

	All age	Under Age 60	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Fewer than 5 years	11%	15%	10%	9%	10%
5-14 years	12%	18%	12%	11%	7%
15-24 years	17%	28%	19%	11%	11%
25-34 years	18%	18%	24%	14%	10%
35-44 years	16%	3%	21%	23%	7%
45 years or longer	26%	18%	14%	32%	55%
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

### How important is it to you to remain living in Swampscott as you get older?

	All ages	Under Age 60	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Very Important	53%	40%	47%	60%	68%
Somewhat Important	32%	41%	34%	28%	24%
Slightly Important	9%	11%	11%	8%	4%
Not at All Important	6%	8%	8%	4%	4%
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

### Do you rent or own your current place of residence?

	All ages	Under Age 60	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Own	86%	91%	86%	89%	74%
Rent	12%	8%	12%	10%	23%
Other	2%	1%	2%	1%	3%
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

**Which of the following best describes your current place of residence?**

	All ages	Under Age 60	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Single-family home	68%	82%	68%	66%	49%
Multi-family home (2, 3, or more units)	10%	2%	1%	1%	2%
Accessory apartment (add-on apartment to an existing home)	1%	5%	11%	11%	12%
Condominium or townhome	17%	10%	16%	19%	29%
Assisted living community (e.g., Bertram House or Residence at Vinnin Square)	1%	0%	0%	0%	5%
Other (Please specify):	3%	1%	4%	3%	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**With whom do you live? (Check all that apply)**

	All ages	Under Age 60	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
I live alone	23%	9%	19%	29%	44%
A spouse/partner	66%	78%	73%	66%	42%
I live with a relative (e.g., children, grandchildren, parents)	13%	28%	10%	6%	10%
Other	3%	5%	4%	1%	3%

*\*Figures do not sum to 100%*

**Does your current residence have a bedroom and full bath on the first floor?**

	All ages	Under Age 60	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
<b>Yes</b>	44%	27%	43%	46%	68%
<b>No</b>	56%	73%	57%	54%	32%
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

**In the next 5 years, if you needed move from your current home, what kind of housing would you prefer in Swampscott? (Check all that apply)**

	All ages	Under Age 60	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
<b>Small single-family home</b>	36%	61%	39%	26%	14%
<b>Accessory apartment (add-on apartment to existing home)</b>	4%	7%	3%	4%	3%
<b>Apartment, condominium or townhome</b>	38%	37%	48%	39%	21%
<b>Senior Independent Living community (e.g., continuing care retirement community, 55+ community)</b>	23%	12%	22%	32%	29%
<b>Assisted Living Community</b>	9%	3%	4%	11%	25%
<b>Affordable or subsidized housing</b>	14%	10%	13%	18%	18%
<b>Other</b>	8%	13%	8%	6%	8%

*\*Figures do not sum to 100%*

**Is it your preference to rent or own your next home?**

	All ages	Under Age 60	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
<b>Own</b>	54%	74%	62%	42%	24%
<b>Rent</b>	15%	7%	14%	20%	19%
<b>N/A, I do not intend to move from my current residence</b>	31%	19%	24%	38%	57%
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

**Does your current residence need home repairs (e.g., new roof, electrical work, etc.) to improve your ability to live in it safely for the next five years?**

	All ages	Under Age 60	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
<b>Yes, and I can afford to make these repairs.</b>	27%	35%	28%	25%	19%
<b>Yes, but I cannot afford to make these repairs.</b>	10%	11%	9%	11%	7%
<b>Yes, but I am not responsible for making these repairs (e.g., I rent my current residence)</b>	5%	4%	4%	6%	9%
<b>No, my current residence does not need repairs.</b>	58%	50%	59%	58%	65%
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

**Does your current residence need home modifications (e.g., grab bars in showers or railings on stairs) to improve your ability to live in it safely for the next five years?**

	All ages	Under Age 60	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
<b>Yes, and I can afford to make these modifications.</b>	23%	15%	24%	29%	18%
<b>Yes, but I cannot afford to make these modifications.</b>	6%	5%	6%	8%	6%
<b>No, my current residence does not need modifications.</b>	71%	80%	70%	63%	76%
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

**I use the following methods of transportation to meet my travel needs. (Check all that apply)**

	All ages	Under Age 60	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
I drive myself	96%	97%	98%	98%	88%
Family or friends drive me	59%	44%	52%	63%	94%
Public transportation (e.g., MBTA bus, commuter rail)	32%	73%	65%	63%	24%
Paratransit (e.g., the RIDE)	8%	2%	4%	9%	41%
Senior Center transportation (e.g., Senior Center vans)	3%	1%	4%	9%	42%
Taxi or ride sharing service (e.g., Uber, LYFT)	60%	69%	64%	51%	35%
Walk or bike	41%	88%	84%	60%	46%
Other	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%

*\*Figures do not sum to 100%*

**Which of the following best describes your driving status? (Check only one)**

	All ages	Under Age 60	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
I drive with no limitations	79%	94%	89%	76%	42%
I limit my driving (e.g., I avoid driving at night, during bad weather, in unfamiliar areas)	15%	2%	9%	20%	34%
I do not drive	6%	4%	2%	4%	24%
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%



Within the last 12 months, did you have to miss, cancel, or reschedule a medical appointment because of a lack of transportation?

	All ages	Under Age 60	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
<b>Yes</b>	4%	4%	3%	4%	7%
<b>No</b>	96%	96%	97%	96%	93%
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Please rate your level of satisfaction with each of the following features of Swampscott.

*Transportation Options*

	All ages	Under Age 60	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
<b>Very Satisfied</b>	18%	19%	18%	19%	18%
<b>Satisfied</b>	46%	46%	49%	48%	38%
<b>Dissatisfied</b>	10%	13%	9%	10%	7%
<b>Very Dissatisfied</b>	3%	5%	2%	2%	3%
<b>I don't know</b>	23%	17%	22%	21%	34%
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

*Availability of Parking*

	All ages	Under Age 60	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
<b>Very Satisfied</b>	13%	8%	13%	15%	17%
<b>Satisfied</b>	52%	56%	47%	55%	49%
<b>Dissatisfied</b>	24%	27%	27%	22%	17%
<b>Very Dissatisfied</b>	7%	6%	9%	5%	6%
<b>I don't know</b>	4%	3%	4%	3%	1%
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

***Accessibility of Parking***

	All ages	Under Age 60	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
<b>Very Satisfied</b>	13%	7%	14%	15%	16%
<b>Satisfied</b>	53%	58%	49%	56%	49%
<b>Dissatisfied</b>	20%	19%	21%	20%	21%
<b>Very Dissatisfied</b>	6%	5%	8%	4%	4%
<b>I don't know</b>	8%	11%	8%	5%	10%
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

***Clear and consistent speed limit signage and enforcement***

	All ages	Under Age 60	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
<b>Very Satisfied</b>	15%	11%	15%	15%	20%
<b>Satisfied</b>	61%	59%	62	60%	59%
<b>Dissatisfied</b>	13%	15%	14%	14%	9%
<b>Very Dissatisfied</b>	6%	9%	5%	6%	3%
<b>I don't know</b>	5%	6%	4%	5%	9%
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%12+	100%

***Handicap accessibility of walkways, public buildings, and businesses***

	All ages	Under Age 60	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
<b>Very Satisfied</b>	13%	8%	12%	16%	16%
<b>Satisfied</b>	51%	47%	48%	55%	58%
<b>Dissatisfied</b>	9%	15%	8%	7%	6%
<b>Very Dissatisfied</b>	3%	3%	3%	4%	4%
<b>I don't know</b>	24%	27%	29%	18%	16%
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

**Availability of maintained sidewalks**

	All ages	Under Age 60	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
<b>Very Satisfied</b>	9%	6%	8%	10%	13%
<b>Satisfied</b>	42%	44%	41%	41%	44%
<b>Dissatisfied</b>	29%	28%	31%	30%	22%
<b>Very Dissatisfied</b>	16%	20%	17%	14%	12%
<b>I don't know</b>	4%	2%	3%	5%	9%
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

**Lighting along sidewalks and trails**

	All ages	Under Age 60	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
<b>Very Satisfied</b>	8%	5%	7%	9%	13%
<b>Satisfied</b>	49%	51%	45%	51%	49%
<b>Dissatisfied</b>	22%	26%	25%	20%	12%
<b>Very Dissatisfied</b>	8%	9%	9%	7%	6%
<b>I don't know</b>	13%	9%	14%	13%	20%
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

**Availability of shaded benches in public areas and along walkways**

	All ages	Under Age 60	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
<b>Very Satisfied</b>	7%	5%	5%	8%	10%
<b>Satisfied</b>	39%	43%	39%	37%	41%
<b>Dissatisfied</b>	25%	21%	28%	28%	16%
<b>Very Dissatisfied</b>	7%	10%	6%	8%	4%
<b>I don't know</b>	22%	21%	22%	19%	29%
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

### Marked crosswalks and timing of walk signals

	All ages	Under Age 60	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
<b>Very Satisfied</b>	12%	11%	11%	12%	14%
<b>Satisfied</b>	62%	58%	62%	64%	61%
<b>Dissatisfied</b>	14%	19%	14%	12%	12%
<b>Very Dissatisfied</b>	5%	7%	5%	5%	3%
<b>I don't know</b>	7%	5%	8%	7%	10%
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

### Clear and consistent signage and wayfinding around Swampscott

	All ages	Under Age 60	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
<b>Very Satisfied</b>	10%	8%	9%	12%	16%
<b>Satisfied</b>	60%	62%	60%	59%	57%
<b>Dissatisfied</b>	15%	17%	16%	14%	10%
<b>Very Dissatisfied</b>	3%	4%	4%	3%	2%
<b>I don't know</b>	12%	9%	11%	12%	15%
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

### Availability of public restrooms

	All ages	Under Age 60	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
<b>Very Satisfied</b>	3%	1%	2%	4%	5%
<b>Satisfied</b>	14%	10%	14%	13%	20%
<b>Dissatisfied</b>	38%	50%	37%	37%	27%
<b>Very Dissatisfied</b>	18%	21%	19%	19%	13%
<b>I don't know</b>	27%	18%	28%	27%	35%
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

**How often do you talk on the phone, send email, use social media, or get together to visit with family, friends, or neighbors?**

***Talk on the phone with family, friends, or neighbors?***

	All ages	Under Age 60	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
<b>Every day</b>	65%	69%	67%	62%	64%
<b>One or more times a week</b>	27%	22%	26%	29%	28%
<b>More than once a week</b>	5%	5%	4%	6%	3%
<b>Once a month</b>	2%	3%	2%	1%	1%
<b>2-3 times a year</b>	1%	1%	1%	1%	3%
<b>Never</b>	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

***Send email or use social media with family, friends, or neighbors***

	All ages	Under Age 60	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
<b>Every day</b>	66%	81%	71%	61%	38%
<b>One or more times a week</b>	19%	12%	19%	22%	25%
<b>More than once a month</b>	5%	2%	4%	7%	5%
<b>Once a month</b>	2%	3%	2%	2%	2%
<b>2-3 times a year</b>	1%	1%	1%	1%	5%
<b>Never</b>	7%	1%	3%	7%	25%
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

**Get together in person with family, friends, or neighbors**

	All ages	Under Age 60	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Every day	28%	28%	26%	27%	30%
One or more times a week	49%	49%	49%	52%	50%
More than once a week	16%	14%	18%	15%	11%
Once a month	4%	6%	4%	3%	3%
2-3 times a year	3%	3%	3%	3%	5%
Never	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

**Do you know someone living within 30 minutes of your home on whom you can rely for help when you need it?**

	All ages	Under Age 60	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Yes	92%		92%	93%	92%
No	8%		8%	7%	8%
Total	100%		100%	100%	100%

**Would you ask a neighbor for help if you needed assistance with a minor task or errand (e.g., changing a lightbulb, shopping, shoveling snow)?**

	All ages	Under Age 60	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Yes	69%	74%	68%	68%	65%
No	31%	26%	32%	32%	35%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

**Do you provide any help to neighbors with minor tasks or errands?**

	All ages	Under Age 60	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Yes	47%	59%	50%	44%	31%
No	9%	4%	6%	7%	23%
No, but I would be willing if asked	44%	37%	44%	49%	46%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

**In the past month, have you talked with any of your neighbors for 10 minutes or more?**

	All ages	Under Age 60	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
<b>Yes</b>	82%	82%	82%	84%	80%
<b>No</b>	18%	18%	18%	16%	20%
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

**Please state your level of agreement with each statement below.**

*Swampscott offers flexible and accessible opportunities for residents to volunteer (e.g., faith communities, nonprofit organizations).*

	All ages	Under Age 60	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
<b>Strongly Agree</b>	15%	19%	13%	15%	15%
<b>Agree</b>	44%	39%	44%	47%	45%
<b>Disagree</b>	6%	8%	6%	6%	5%
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	2%	2%	1%	0%	2%
<b>I don't know</b>	33	32%	36%	32%	33%
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

*Swampscott offers ample opportunities for residents to participate in local government (e.g., boards, committees).*

	All ages	Under Age 60	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
<b>Strongly Agree</b>	14%	20%	13%	13%	14%
<b>Agree</b>	50%	48%	50%	52%	49%
<b>Disagree</b>	8%	9%	7%	10%	7%
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%
<b>I don't know</b>	26%	21%	28%	23%	29%
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

**Local policymakers take into account the interests and concerns of older residents.**

	All ages	Under Age 60	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
<b>Strongly Agree</b>	5%	6%	4%	5%	7%
<b>Agree</b>	29%	32%	25%	28%	33%
<b>Disagree</b>	18%	14%	19%	22%	16%
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	7%	8%	8%	7%	6%
<b>I don't know</b>	41%	40%	44%	38%	38%
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

**Are there sufficient places to go in Swampscott to socialize or for leisure activity?**

	All ages	Under Age 60	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
<b>Yes</b>	61%	49%	58%	68%	76%
<b>No</b>	39%	51%	42%	32%	24%
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

**Have you ever felt excluded in Swampscott because of your:**

	All ages	Under Age 60	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
<b>Skin color, race, or ethnicity</b>	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%
<b>Sexual orientation</b>	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%
<b>Age</b>	5%	5%	3%	7%	3%
<b>Gender</b>	1%	3%	1%	1%	0%
<b>Religion or cultural background</b>	3%	4%	5%	3%	1%
<b>Income</b>	6%	13%	4%	5%	1%
<b>Disability</b>	2%	3%	1%	3%	2%
<b>No, I have never felt excluded</b>	77%	69%	79%	81%	88%

**\*Figures do not sum to 100%**



Please rate your level of satisfaction with each of the following aspects of your community.

***Fitness opportunities (such as exercise classes and paths or trails)***

	All ages	Under Age 60	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Very Satisfied	18%	18%	18%	18%	20%
Satisfied	50%	53%	49%	51%	48%
Dissatisfied	15%	19%	16%	14%	6%
Very Dissatisfied	2%	2%	3%	2%	1%
I don't know	15%	8%	14%	15%	25%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

***Affordable, quality food***

	All ages	Under Age 60	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Very Satisfied	18%	13%	16%	19%	28%
Satisfied	62%	59%	64%	64%	57%
Dissatisfied	14%	22%	14%	12%	6%
Very Dissatisfied	2%	4%	3%	1%	1%
I don't know	4%	2%	3%	4%	7%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

***Chore/Homemaking or home health aide services***

	All ages	Under Age 60	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Very Satisfied	7%	2%	5%	8%	17%
Satisfied	21%	20%	18%	21%	30%
Dissatisfied	4%	2%	3%	5%	3%
Very Dissatisfied	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%
I don't know	67%	75%	73%	64%	49%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

***Caregiver support (such as respite or support groups)***

	All ages	Under Age 60	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
<b>Very Satisfied</b>	4%	2%	3%	4%	11%
<b>Satisfied</b>	16%	13%	14%	16%	23%
<b>Dissatisfied</b>	4%	4%	4%	5%	4%
<b>Very Dissatisfied</b>	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%
<b>I don't know</b>	75%	80%	78%	73%	61%
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

***Opportunities for continued learning (such as lifelong learning opportunities, workshops, or tours)***

	All ages	Under Age 60	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
<b>Very Satisfied</b>	7%	5%	4%	7%	14%
<b>Satisfied</b>	26%	21%	24%	27%	33%
<b>Dissatisfied</b>	15%	21%	16%	15%	7%
<b>Very Dissatisfied</b>	2%	3%	2%	3%	1%
<b>I don't know</b>	50%	50%	54%	48%	45%
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

***Opportunities in your neighborhood for informal sharing and social interaction***

	All ages	Under Age 60	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
<b>Very Satisfied</b>	9%	10%	7%	9%	11%
<b>Satisfied</b>	36%	38%	35%	37%	36%
<b>Dissatisfied</b>	14%	18%	14%	13%	10%
<b>Very Dissatisfied</b>	3%	5%	3%	4%	1%
<b>I don't know</b>	38%	29%	41%	37%	42%
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

**Recreational Opportunities**

	All ages	Under Age 60	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
<b>Very Satisfied</b>	11%	10%	11%	12%	13%
<b>Satisfied</b>	53%	56%	51%	52%	52%
<b>Dissatisfied</b>	12%	17%	13%	10%	6%
<b>Very Dissatisfied</b>	2%	3%	3%	2%	1%
<b>I don't know</b>	22%	14%	22%	24%	28%
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

**Quality of social services (such as information and referral services, or Meals on Wheels)**

	All ages	Under Age 60	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
<b>Very Satisfied</b>	6%	2%	4%	8%	12%
<b>Satisfied</b>	21%	12%	18%	22%	37%
<b>Dissatisfied</b>	4%	4%	2%	5%	5%
<b>Very Dissatisfied</b>	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%
<b>I don't know</b>	68%	80%	75%	64%	45%
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

**Access to physical health services**

	All ages	Under Age 60	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
<b>Very Satisfied</b>	12%	10%	11%	12%	19%
<b>Satisfied</b>	44%	40%	41%	50%	50%
<b>Dissatisfied</b>	5%	6%	4%	6%	3%
<b>Very Dissatisfied</b>	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%
<b>I don't know</b>	38%	43%	44%	31%	27%
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

**Access to mental or behavioral health services**

	All ages	Under Age 60	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
<b>Very Satisfied</b>	7%	6%	4%	8%	12%
<b>Satisfied</b>	23%	21%	24%	22%	25%
<b>Dissatisfied</b>	7%	9%	6%	6%	5%
<b>Very Dissatisfied</b>	2%	4%	1%	1%	1%
<b>I don't know</b>	61%	60%	65%	63%	57%
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

**How frequently do you use programs or services offered by the Swampscott Senior Center?**

	All ages	Under Age 60	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
<b>Two or more times a week</b>	3%	0%	0%	3%	16%
<b>About once a week</b>	4%	0%	1%	6%	9%
<b>A few times a month</b>	2%	0%	2%	3%	2%
<b>About once a month</b>	1%	1%	0%	2%	1%
<b>A few times a year (e.g., special events)</b>	8%	3%	6%	12%	17%
<b>Never, I do not use programs or services offered by the Swampscott Senior Center</b>	82%	96%	91%	74%	55%
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

If never: What is the reason that you do not currently use programs or services offered by the Swampscott Senior Center? (Check all that apply)

	All ages	Under Age 60	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
I am not interested	25%	17%	22%	32%	40%
I participate in programs elsewhere	15%	5%	14%	25%	19%
I am unaware of activities or programs available	23%	16%	29%	23%	15%
I do not have time	17%	12%	21%	20%	10%
I am not old enough	30%	75%	27%	7%	2%
Hours of operation are inconvenient	3%	2%	4%	4%	4%
Other	18%	9%	22%	18%	22%

*\*Figures do not sum to 100%.*

How do you currently obtain information about programs, activities, and services in your community? (Check all that apply)

	All ages	Under Age 60	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Local newspaper	51%	46%	50%	57%	64%
Word of mouth	52%	60%	52%	53%	55%
The Town's website	20%	35%	23%	15%	9%
Social media postings (e.g., Facebook, Twitter)	30%	62%	35%	20%	6%
Faith-based organizations	10%	9%	10%	12%	12%
Senior Center Newsletter	12%	2%	5%	17%	34%
TV/Radio	9%	7%	7%	9%	19%
Other	9%	10%	9%	9%	11%

*\*Figures do not sum to 100%.*

**Are you able to access the internet from your home? (Check all that apply)**

	All ages	Under Age 60	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Yes, using a smartphone (that is a cellular phone that provides access to the internet)	67%	90%	81%	66%	30%
Yes, using a home computer, laptop, tablet	81%	90%	89%	87%	68%
No, I do not have internet access at home	5%	1%	2%	5%	21%
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

*\*Figures do not sum to 100%.*

**Do you feel informed about what to do in the event of a weather or other emergency?**

	All ages	Under Age 60	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Yes	88%	84%	85%	91%	94%
No	12%	16%	15%	9%	6%
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

**Would you know whom to contact in Swampscott should you or someone in your family need help accessing social services, health services, or other municipal services?**

	All ages	Under Age 60	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Yes	51%	44%	47%	52%	70%
No	49%	56%	53%	48%	30%
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

**How much are your daily activities limited by your health or health-related problems?**

	All ages	Under Age 60	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
<b>Almost always</b>	4%	3%	2%	4%	9%
<b>Often</b>	6%	2%	3%	6%	16%
<b>Sometimes</b>	15%	5%	10%	19%	32%
<b>Seldom</b>	18%	15%	16%	24%	16%
<b>Not at all</b>	57%	75%	69%	47%	27%
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

**Do you now or have you in the past 5 years provided care or assistance to a person who is disabled, frail, or struggling with a physical or mental health condition (e.g., spouse, parent, relative, or friend)?**

	All ages	Under Age 60	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
<b>Yes</b>	49%	57%	52%	46%	37%
<b>No</b>	51%	43%	48%	54%	63%
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

**If Yes, Did or does this person live with you?**

	All ages	Under Age 60	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
<b>Yes</b>	32%	23%	26%	39%	53%
<b>No</b>	68%	77%	74%	61%	47%
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

*\*This table only includes respondents who reported providing care to someone now or in the last five years.*

**If Yes, Did this person have the following conditions?**

	All ages	Under Age 60	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Sensory impairment (e.g., vision, hearing)	18%	16%	18%	21%	19%
Mobility impairment (e.g., difficulty walking, climbing stairs)	59%	57%	61%	59%	53%
Recent surgery	22%	23%	18%	27%	22%
Chronic disease (e.g., cancer, diabetes)	30%	30%	29%	33%	24%
Alzheimer's or dementia	25%	21%	27%	24%	27%
Psychological condition (e.g., anxiety, depression)	15%	17%	15%	15%	12%
Intellectual or developmental disability	4%	5%	4%	4%	5%
Other	10%	9%	11%	11%	9%

*\*Figures do not sum to 100%.*

*\*This table only includes respondents who reported providing care to someone now or in the last five years.*

**If Yes, How challenging is/was it for you to care for this person(s) and meet your other responsibilities with family and/or work?**

	All ages	Under Age 60	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Very Challenging	22%	27%	22%	19%	24%
Somewhat Challenging	38%	38%	42%	34%	27%
Neither challenging Nor Easy	25%	22%	24%	29%	26%
Somewhat Easy	9%	9%	9%	11%	7%
Very Easy	6%	4%	3%	7%	16%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

*\*This table only includes respondents who reported providing care to someone now or in the last five years.*



**What is your age range?**

	All ages
Under age 55	6%
55-59	14%
60-69	35%
70-79	30%
80-89	12%
90+	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Please select your gender.**

	All ages	Under Age 60	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Male	40%	39%	37%	44%	40%
Female	59%	60%	62%	55%	60%
Other	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Do not care to respond	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**What is your employment status?**

	All ages	Under Age 60	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Working full time	32%	73%	43%	11%	3%
Working part time	14%	7%	19%	18%	9%
Retired	46%	6%	35%	72%	88%
Looking for work	3%	8%	3%	3%	0%
Other	5%	8%	7%	2%	2%

*Figures do not sum to 100%*

**When do you plan to fully retire?**

	All ages	Under Age 60	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
<b>N/A, I am already fully retired</b>	44%	4%	31%	68%	89%
<b>Within the next 3 years</b>	9%	3%	16%	9%	1%
<b>In 3 to 5 years</b>	9%	11%	14%	5%	0%
<b>In 6 to 10 years</b>	10%	22%	13%	1%	0%
<b>In more than 10 years</b>	8%	35%	3%	0%	0%
<b>Not sure</b>	11%	14%	13%	9%	3%
<b>I do not anticipate ever fully retiring</b>	9%	11%	10%	8%	7%
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

**Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statement: I have adequate resources to meet my financial needs, including home maintenance, personal healthcare, and other expenses.**

	All ages	Under Age 60	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
<b>Strongly Agree</b>	23%	19%	23%	23%	24%
<b>Agree</b>	60%	61%	61%	61%	58%
<b>Disagree</b>	13%	13%	13%	12%	15%
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	4%	7%	3%	4%	3%
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

## **TOWN OF SWAMPSCOTT**

### **OFFICE OF THE TOWN ADMINISTRATOR**

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22 Monument Avenue  
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## **UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS BOSTON GERONTOLOGY INSTITUTE**

### **CENTER FOR SOCIAL & DEMOGRAPHIC RESEARCH ON AGING**

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Boston, MA 02125-3393  
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# Swampscott for All Ages: A Community Needs Assessment

October 2019

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Commissioned by the Town of Swampscott  
&  
Swampscott for All Ages Committee

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# Acknowledgments

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This project would not have been possible without the support from:

- ❖ Heidi Whear, Bob Powell
- ❖ Swampscott for All Ages Committee
- ❖ Sean Fitzgerald
- ❖ The residents of Swampscott who participated in the project

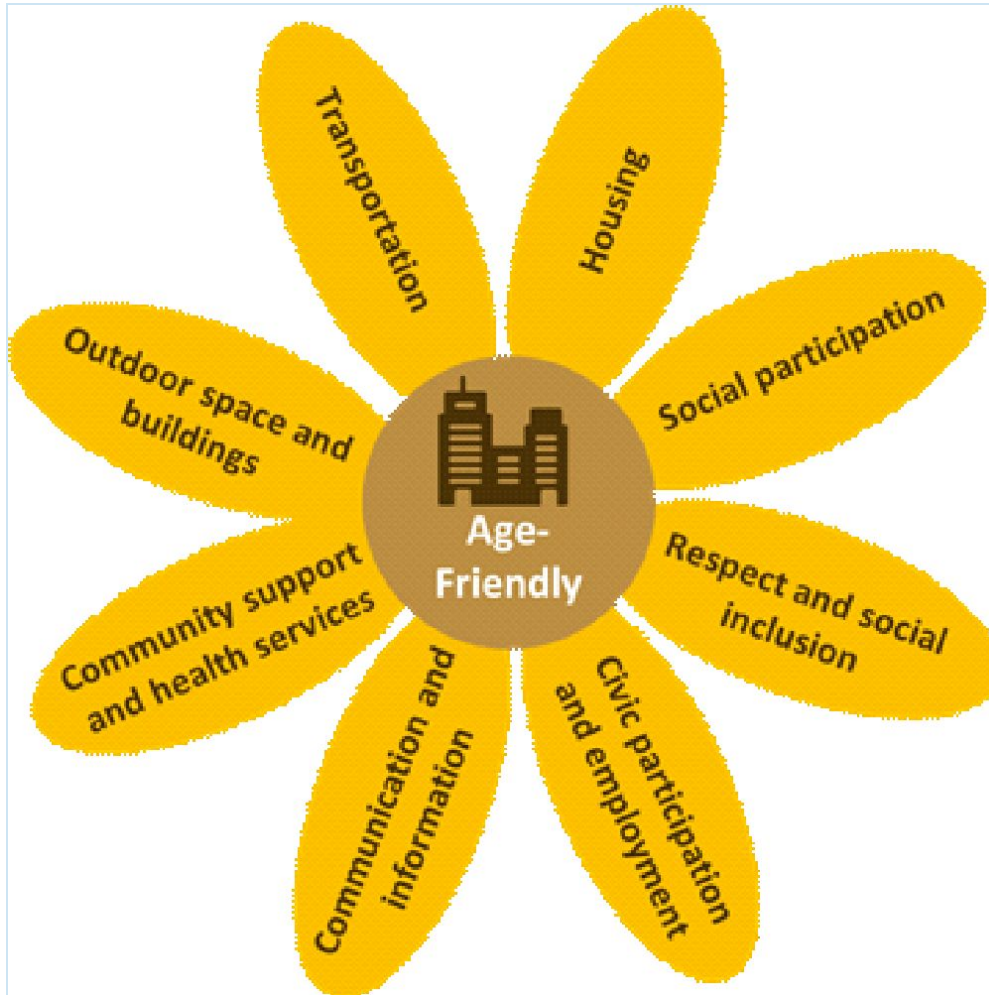
# Outline of Today's Presentation

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- ❑ The Age and Dementia Friendly framework
- ❑ Strategies used to hear from community of Swampscott
- ❑ Swampscott Characteristics and Recommendations by Age-Friendly Domain
- ❑ Discussion

# Age-Friendly Framework

## The Eight Domains of an Age-Friendly Community



- Enables people of **all ages** to **actively participate in community activities** and **treats everyone with respect**, regardless of their age
- Makes it easy for older people to **stay connected** to people who are important to them
- Helps people **stay healthy** and provides **support to those who can no longer live independently**

# Dementia Friendly Community



- Meaningful access to and engagement in community life for people living with dementia and their family.
- Each sector of community works to create an informed, safe and respectful community.
- Prioritizing the promotion of quality of life for those living with dementia and their care partners.



# Goals in Developing the *Swampscott for All Ages Report*

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- ▶ Develop an understanding of Swampscott's *assets* and *concerns* of the community.
- ▶ Provide preliminary ideas for ways in which Swampscott's age friendly features may be improved.
- ▶ Draw on resident and stakeholder input.

# Strategies for Learning about Swampscott

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- Review of Existing Data
- Community Forum (~100 residents)
- Seven Key-Informant Interviews
  - Town Administrator
  - Senior Center Director
  - Planning Board Member
  - Police Chief
  - Fire Chief
  - GLSS Executive Director
  - YMCA Executive Director
- Four Focus Groups (29 participants)

# Strategies for Learning about Swampscott

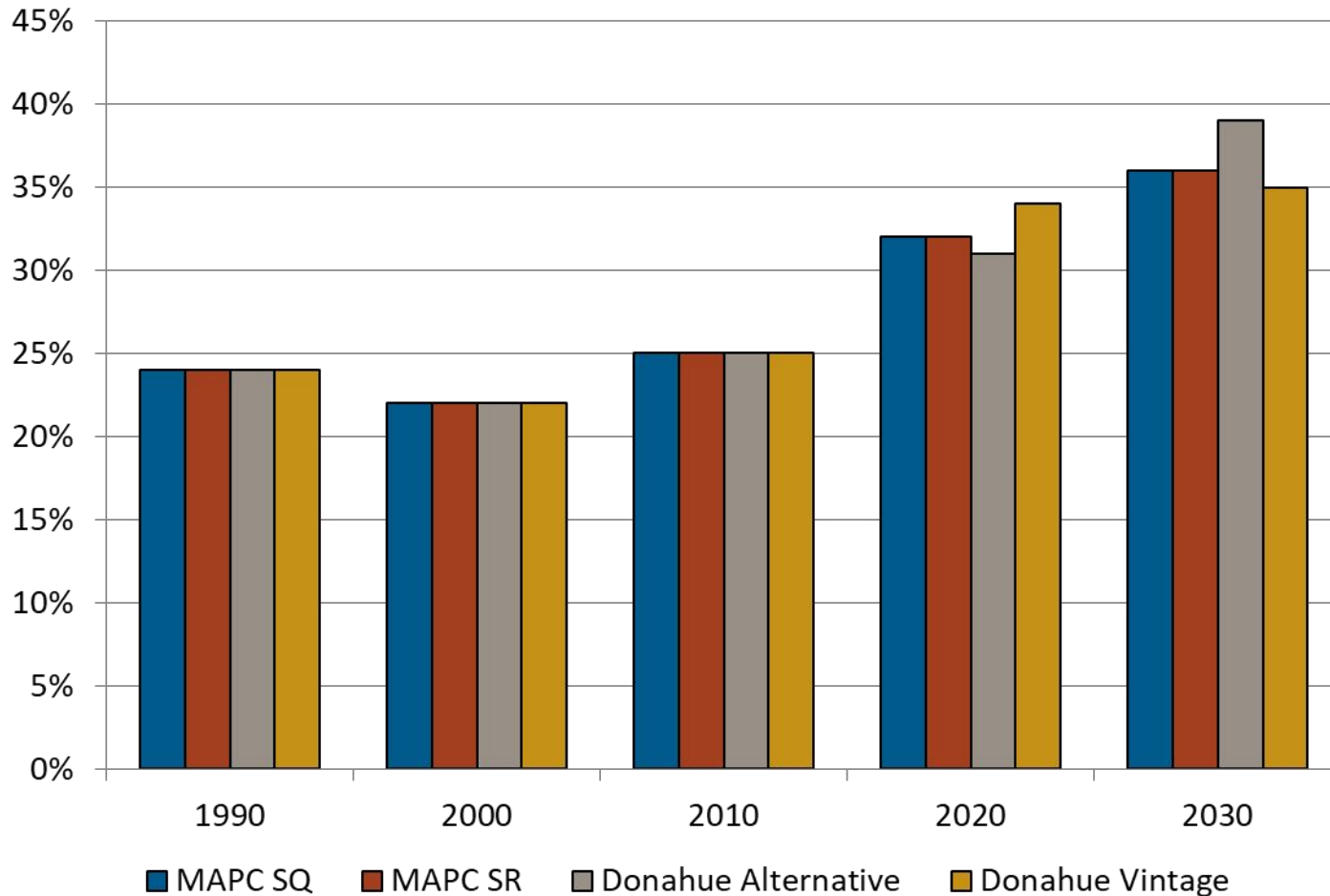
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- Resident Survey (55+)
- N=1,645 (33% Response rate)

	Survey Respondents	American Community Survey
55-59	14%	16%
60-69	38%	47%
70-79	32%	19%
80+	16%	18%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

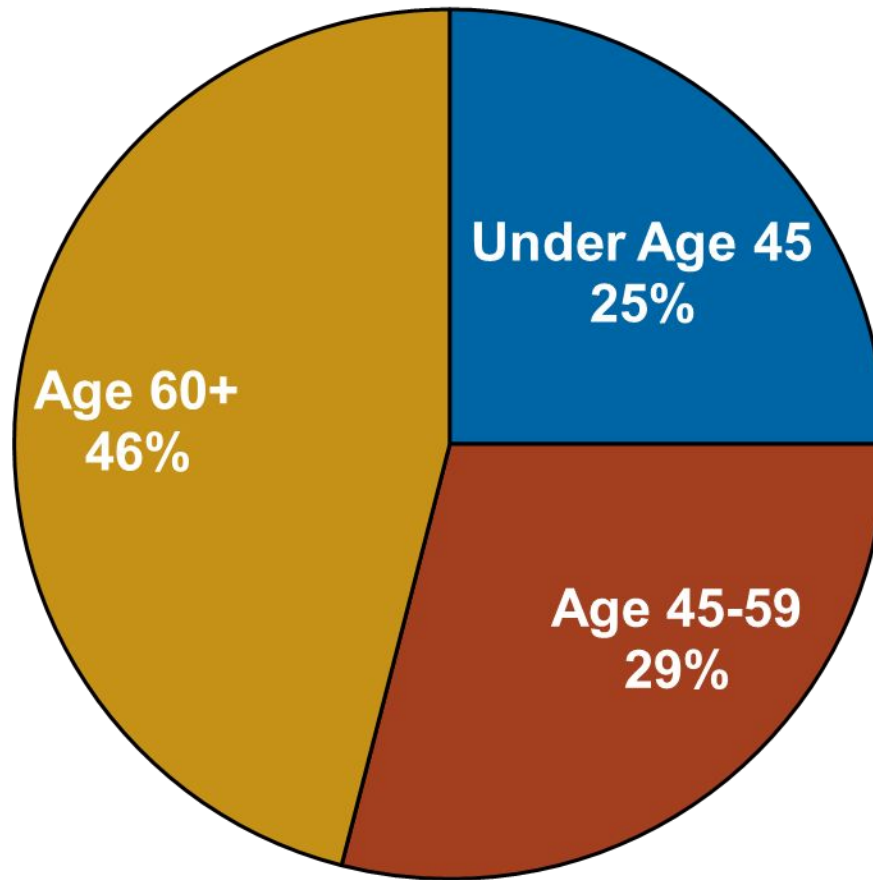
- Peer Community Comparison
  - Salem
  - Marblehead

# By 2030 35% of Swampscott Residents Will Be 60+



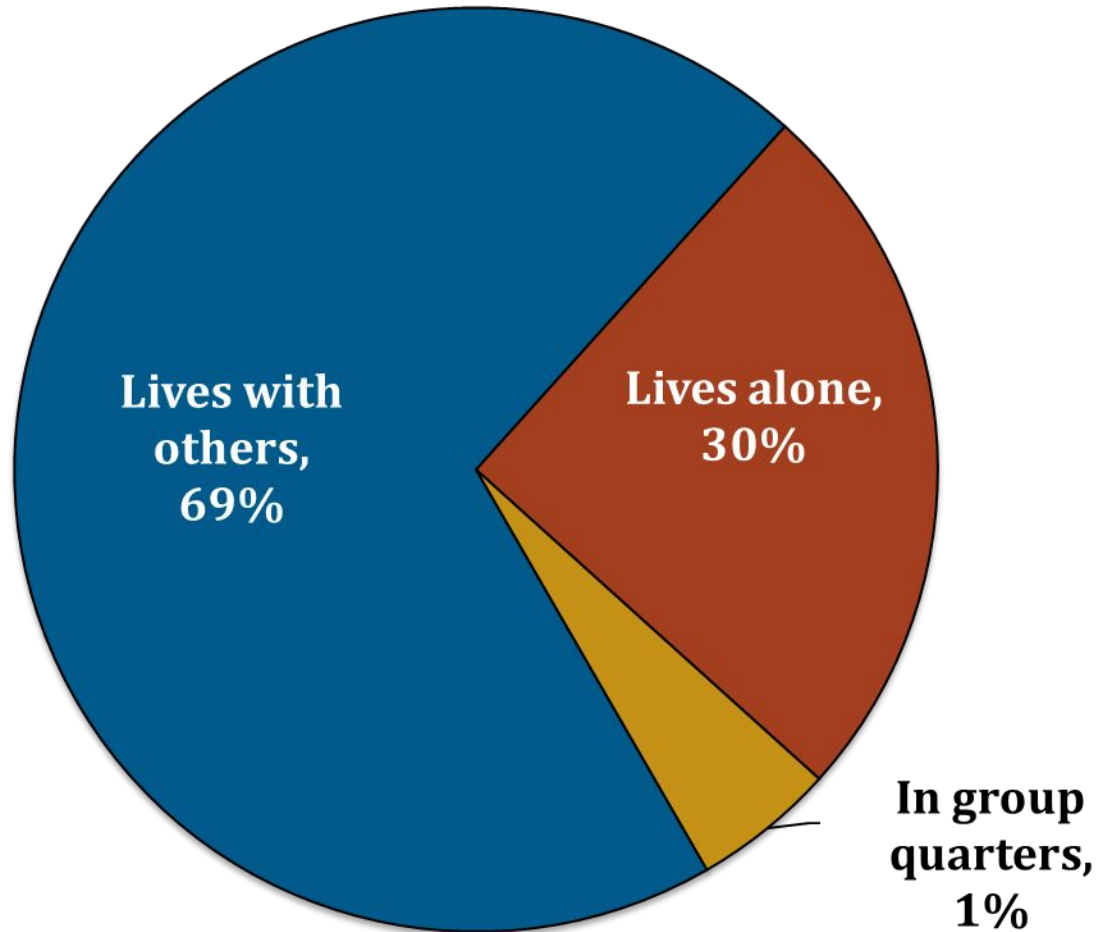
Sources: Population figures for 1990 through 2010 are from the U.S. Census. Projection figures are from the Donahue Institute and MAPC.

# 46% of Swampscott Homeowners are Age 60+



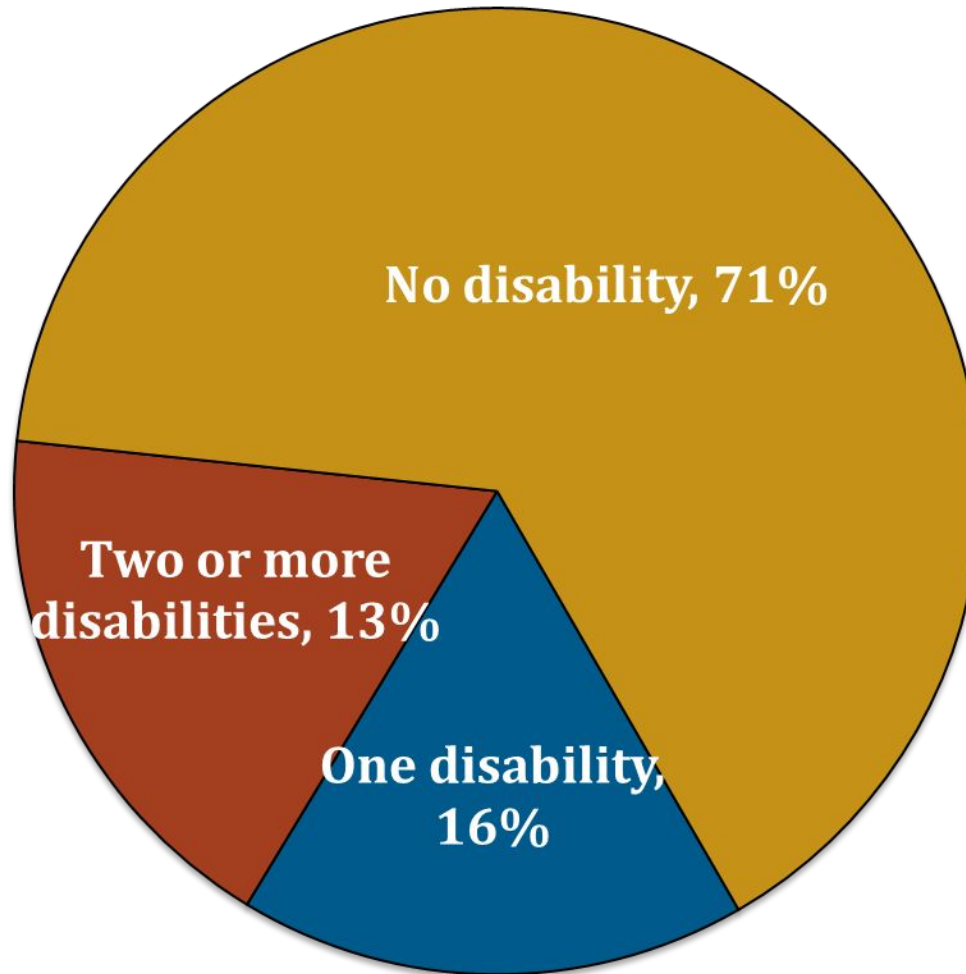
Source: American Community Survey, 2013-2017, Tables B25007 and B25011  
Numbers are calculated from 5-year survey estimates.

# 30% of Swampscott Seniors are Living Alone



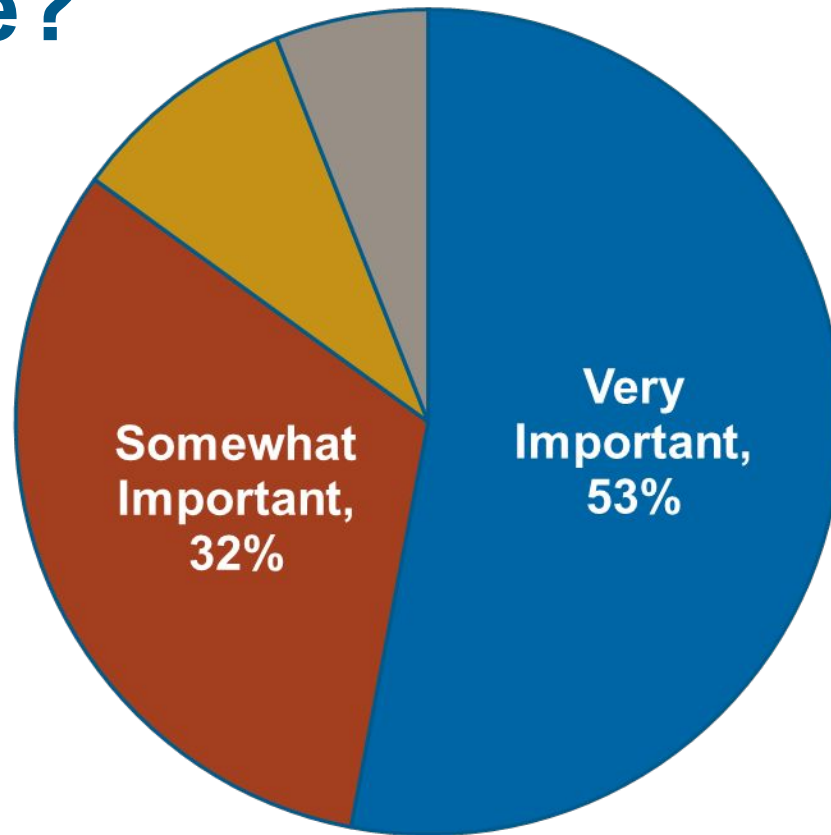
Source: American Community Survey, 2013-2017, Table B09020.  
Numbers are calculated from 5-year survey estimates

# 35% of Swampscott Residents Age 65+ have a Disability



Source: U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey, 2013-2017, Table C18108

# How important is it for you to remain living in Swampscott as you age?



■ Very Important  
■ Slightly Important

■ Somewhat Important  
■ Not at all Important



# Cross-Cutting Theme: Affordability and Economic Security

## Community Input

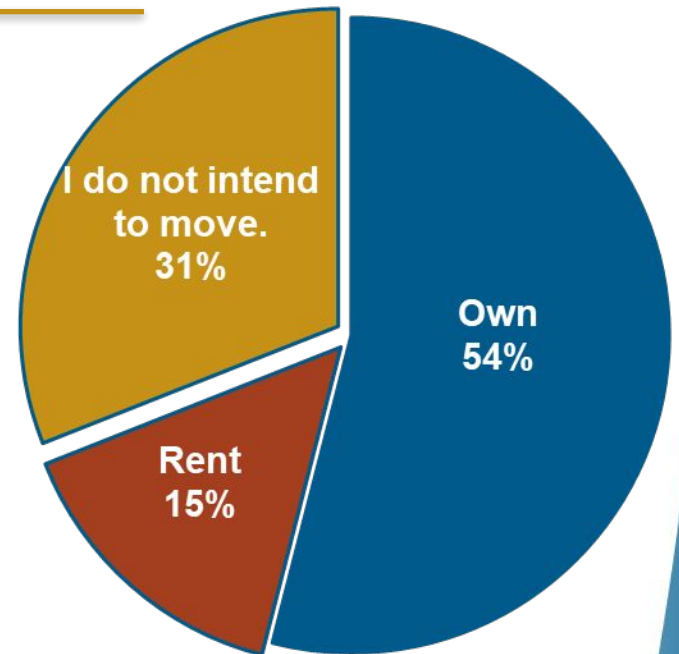
- **“Cost burdened”**: **32%-36%** of homeowners and **61%** of renters are spending more than 30% of their income on housing.
- **Cost of living**, namely property taxes, was the greatest concern about being able to stay in town for **more than half** of the survey respondents.
- **Economic insecurity** reported by **17%** of respondents; **22%** of residents age 65+ report a median income of less than \$25,000/year.

## Ideas for Action

- Consider opportunities to **reduce property taxes** for those needing assistance. For example:
  - **Freeze property taxes** for those over a certain age.
  - **Expand access** to existing property tax relief programs by raising the income limit for the tax work-off program.
  - Ensure that those who are already eligible for existing programs are **aware** of how to apply.

# Housing

- **56%** of survey respondents reported that their current home does not have a **bathroom and bedroom on the first floor.**
- **Apartment, condo, or townhome** preferred by respondents age 60-79.
- **Senior independent living** preferred by the 80+ population.
- Of the **37%** of survey respondents reporting **home repair needs. 10% cannot afford them.**



*“[my greatest concern is] living alone in a large house. Maintaining property is increasingly difficult....”*

# HOUSING: Ideas for Action

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- Investigate **strategies** for developing a “**village**” in Swampscott.
- Promote **home repair and modification** so that current housing is **appropriate** as people age.
- Review zoning regulations to identify opportunities to create housing alternatives (e.g., accessory dwelling units, co-housing, creation of multifamily); and ensure that these opportunities are accessible.
- Increase the opportunity for **public discourse** around **affordable senior housing**.
- Increase **community connections to senior housing developments**—consider targeted outreach of information.

# Transportation

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- **20%** of respondents age 70-79 **modify their driving** as do **34%** of those age 80+, and **24%** of respondents age 80+ **do not drive**.
- **41%** of respondents **walk or bike** as methods of getting around.
- **31%** of respondents are **dissatisfied with parking**.
- **4% - 7%** of respondents **missed, cancelled, or rescheduled a medical appointment** in the last year due to of a lack of transportation.

*“[I am] concerned about the town's ability to remain physically accessible for aging residents, whether it's the condition of roads and walkways to transportation options for residents to get around town”*

# Ideas for Action in Swampscott: TRANSPORTATION

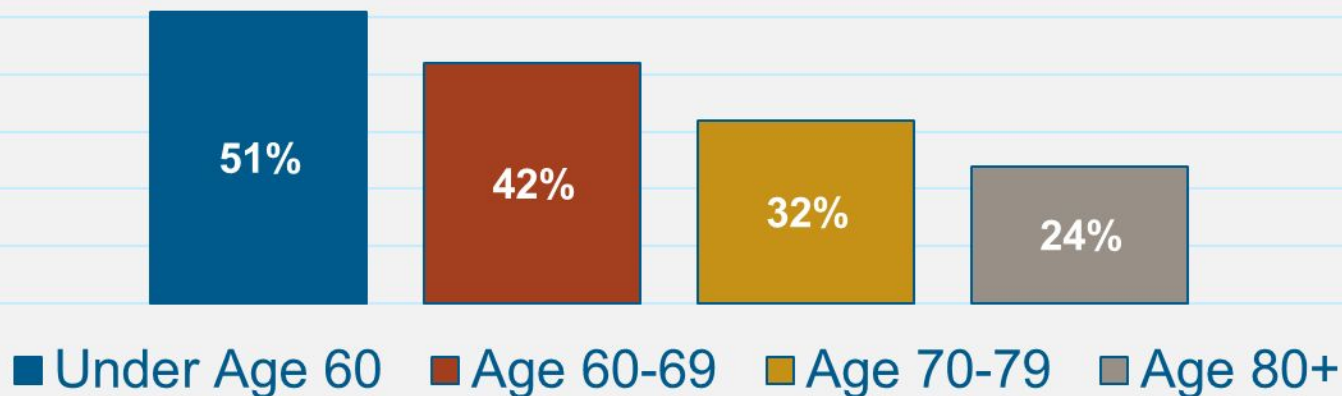
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- **Expand options for medical transportation.** Consider the use of **volunteer drivers.**
- **Work with neighboring communities** to develop a multi-town transportation solutions.
- In support of recent plans for the downtown and waterfront areas—advocate for the completion of **sidewalk/intersection improvements**, added **handicap parking**, **shaded seating**, and **public restrooms** that will improve walkability.
- Make **ride share services in Swampscott** more “**age friendly**”, profile local drivers in the newspaper, host workshops etc.

# Outdoor Spaces & Buildings

- 45% of survey respondents are dissatisfied with availability of **maintained sidewalks**.
- 56% of respondents are dissatisfied with the availability of **public restrooms**.
- 32% are dissatisfied with the availability of **shaded seating**; and 30% dissatisfied with **lighting** along walkways.

Are there sufficient places to go in Swampscott to socialize or for leisure? (% reporting No)



# Ideas for Action in Swampscott: OUTDOOR SPACES & BUILDINGS

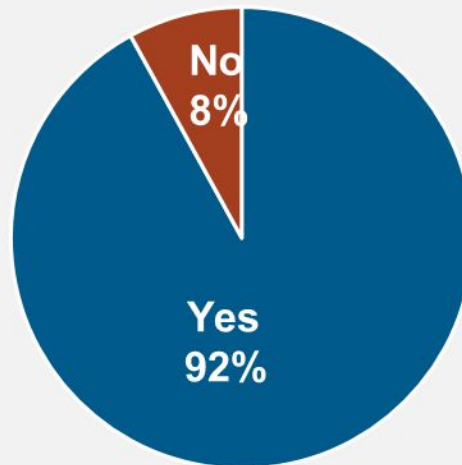
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- Improve **access to community amenities**.
  - Increase knowledge about **public restroom** locations, and potentially increase their availability.
  - Encourage **local businesses** to allow older adults to use their restrooms.
  - Create a **map of public restrooms**.
- Expand the number of locations for participation in **intergenerational social gatherings** and **recreation**.
  - Document and review **capacity of existing buildings** and advocate for a **feasibility study** to expand capacity.
- Create a mechanism for **residents to be informed of the progress of sidewalk and intersection improvements**.

# Social Participation

- **18% did not talk with any neighbors** in the past month.
- **18%** ever participated at the senior center.
  - **“I’m not old enough”** and **“I am not interested”** were the most common reasons for those who do not participate.

**Do you know someone living within 30 minutes or your home on whom you could rely for help?**





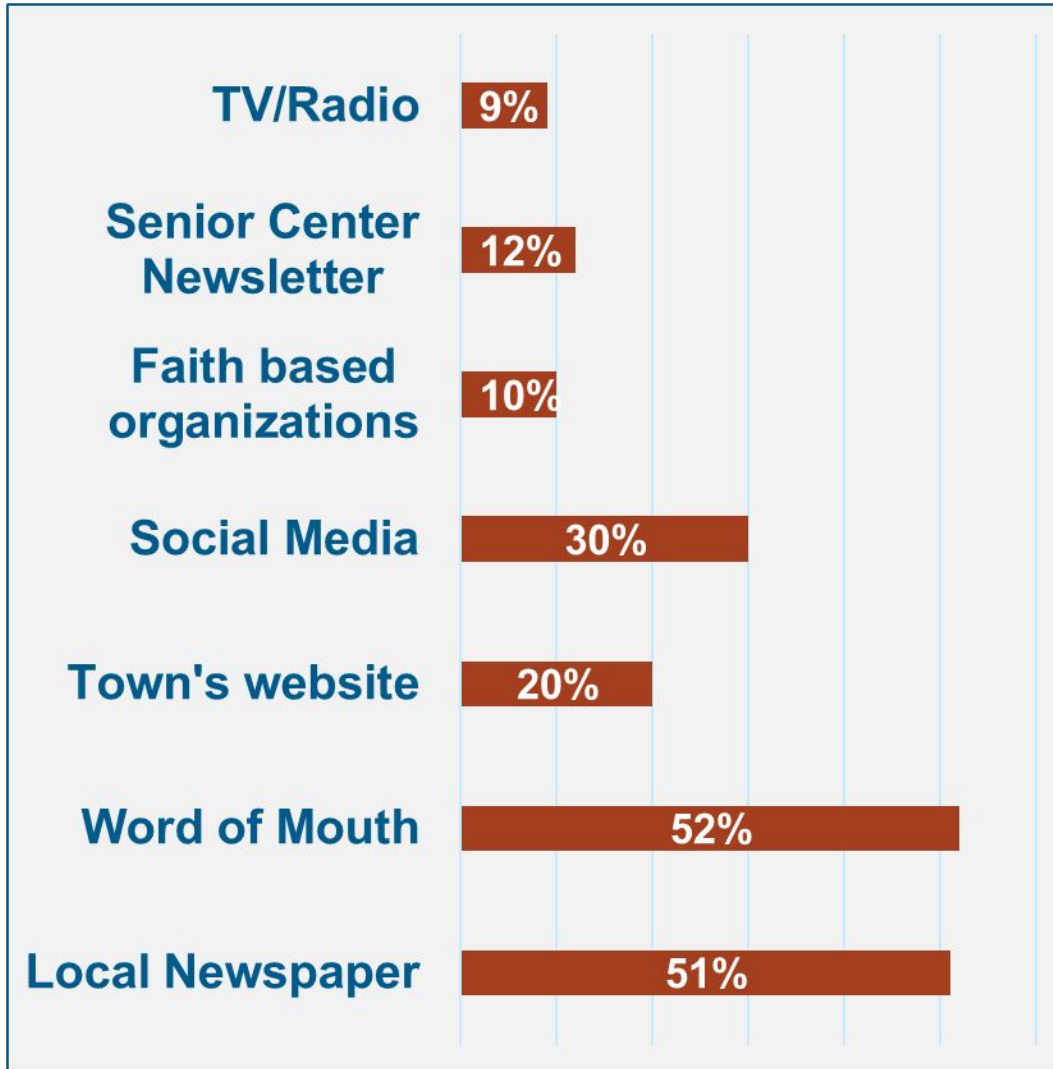
# Ideas for Action in Swampscott:

## SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

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- Initiate a **Facebook page** for older adults—foster peer to peer connections.
- Consider strengthening **intergenerational activities through creation of a senior-student liaison.**
- Develop a “**companion**” program that connects residents who have a shared interest.
- Identify **neighborhood-based programs or mechanisms** to strengthen informal networks in neighborhoods.
- Develop **an Age Friendly regional coalition** to strategize about ways that area senior centers can work together to ensure that all residents have access to the rich array of programs and services.
- Consider ways to **welcome first-time participants** to the Senior Center who are reluctant to participate on their own.

# Communication & Information



- *49% of respondents do **not know who to contact** in if they or someone in their family needed help accessing social, municipal, or health services.*
- **21% of respondents age 80+ do not have Internet access** at home.

# Ideas for Action in Swampscott: COMMUNICATION & INFORMATION

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- Consider **scheduling quarterly meetings** of key employees who work for organizations that provide services to older adults, providing an avenue to share information.
- Continue to **disseminate information** in multiple forms and provide print copies of important information in places other than the senior center.
- Explore the possibility of having a **centralized social calendar** for events happening around Swampscott as a way of making residents aware of programs (e.g., library, senior center, recreation, church groups).

# Civic Engagement & Employment

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- **64%** agree that there are **ample opportunities** to participate in **local government**, and **59%** believe there are **opportunities to volunteer**.
- **46%** of survey respondents are **retired**. **18%** plan to retire in the next 5 years.
- **8%** of respondents under age 60 are **looking for work**.

*“I would appreciate the name of seniors I could help. Also I would appreciate the opportunity to help someone who needs occasional babysitting.”*

# Ideas for Action in Swampscott:

## CIVIC ENGAGEMENT & EMPLOYMENT

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- Designate a group of **resident advocates** who will consistently attend board and committee meetings to **raise awareness of senior issues**.
- As more residents begin to retire, consider ways for them to get **connected with volunteer opportunities** and post-retirement **work**.
  - Consider hosting a “retirement fair” and invite residents who have recently turned 65 as well as business and local organizations seeking part time employees or volunteers.
- **Expand programming** around **retirement planning** or finding a post-retirement **job**.
- Develop a “**citizens leadership academy**” to educate residents of all ages about municipal processes and encourage their involvement.

# Community Supports & Health Services

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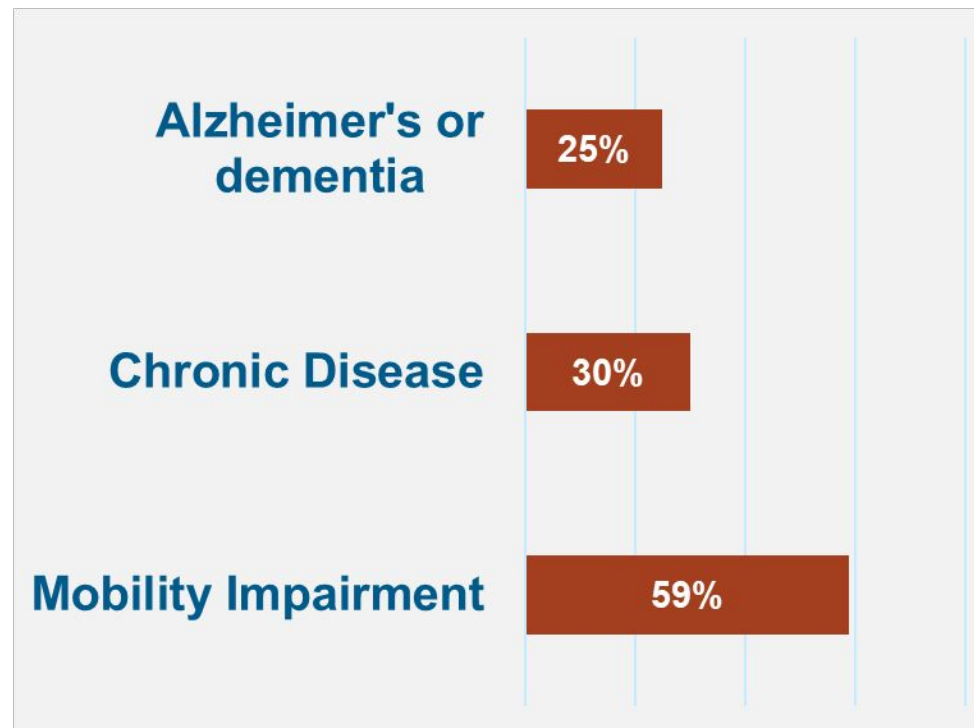
- ▶ *High rates of satisfaction reported for amenities like social services, health services, fitness opportunities and food access.*
- ▶ *High rates (<50%) of “I don’t know” response to questions about social services, mental health services, lifelong learning, and caregiver support and in-home services.*

*“provide a central location to show all regional/town services for the older community. Including in-home assistance, yard work, activities (not just senior center)”*

# Caregivers are important consumers of community supports & health services

- 49% report being a **caregiver**, including 54% of respondents under age 70.
  - Among them, **59%** reported that this caregiving was very or somewhat **challenging** and **72%** of caregivers “don’t know” about **caregiver support**.

Condition of care recipient:



# Ideas for Action in Swampscott: COMMUNITY SUPPORTS & HEALTH SERVICES

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- Host a **“crash course in caregiving”**
  - opportunity to connect the Greater Lynn Senior Services (GLSS) with family caregivers.
- Consider hosting a **“Caregiver’s Night Out”**
  - Explore partnerships with volunteer groups to provide respite care during the event.
- Consider a mechanism to **identify “at-risk” residents**
  - Encourage a **formal collaboration** between the police, fire, and senior center departments. If possible, formulate a **routine check-in** with these residents to stay ahead of crisis-situations.
- Consider **requiring a home-visit before a resident can obtain a lock box or life-alert** from the Swampscott Fire Department



# Respect & Social Inclusion

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- ▶ 6% of respondents feel discriminated against because of **income**
- ▶ 5% because of **age**
- ▶ 3% because of **religion/culture**
  
- ▶ **1 in 4 survey** respondents does not agree that local policymakers take into account the interests and concerns of older residents

*“I think this effort is excellent and I hope a lot of insight comes from it. I support the idea of a permanent commission on multicultural and all ages living. There needs to be central leadership in this regard.”*

# Ideas for Action in Swampscott: RESPECT & SOCIAL INCLUSION

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- Review existing accessibility of public events and meetings to ensure inclusion—include transportation, seating, closed captioning, restrooms and cost to ensure that all residents feel welcome and supported.
- Promote **greater awareness of dementia** in the community.
  - Expanding and developing dementia-friendly initiatives such as public education about dementia, access to adult day programs, and businesses that are trained to interact with people with dementia may be considered.
- Incorporate **elements of inclusion and respect in the Swampscott for All Ages mission statement**.

# Priorities for Swampscott for All Ages

- ▶ **Outdoor Spaces & Buildings:** Coordinate and support existing plan to improve walkability and accessibility of Swampscott's outdoor spaces
- ▶ **Community Support & Health Services:** Increase outreach to caregivers and those at risk for social isolation
- ▶ **Communication & Information:** increase channels to residents about existing resources available to Swampscott residents and facilitate networking among stakeholders to sustain communication.
- ▶ **Advocacy:** Ensure that older residents are present in decision making processes and that there are sufficient opportunities for their voices to be heard in planning discussions.
- ▶ Explore and present creative alternatives—including regional approaches to:
  - ▶ Housing
  - ▶ Transportation
  - ▶ Programming

# Next steps:

- ▶ Develop an action plan that includes:
  - ▶ Action steps, possible collaborators, estimated timeline and “outputs”
- ▶ Continue having a public presence and facilitating community conversations and events around livability and aging
- ▶ Implement the action steps laid out in the plan

# Thank You!

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